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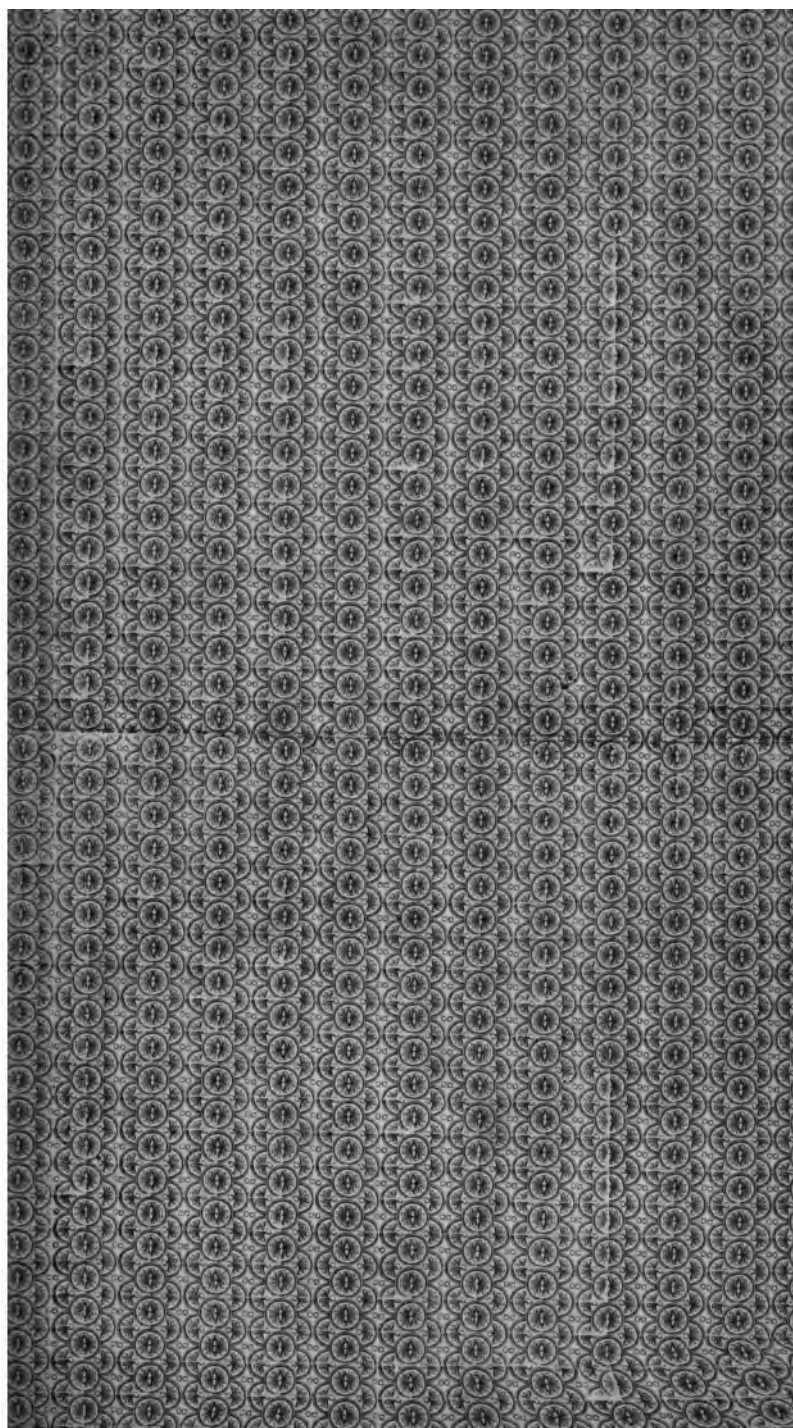


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FRANK FORESTER

AND

HIS FRIENDS;

OR,

WOODLAND ADVENTURES

IN THE

Middle States of North America.

BY

HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT,

AUTHOR OF

"FIELD SPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES," "MARMADUKE WYVIL," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE
WARWICK WOODLANDS.

MY FIRST VISIT.

DAY THE FIRST.

It was a fine October evening when I was sitting on the back stoop of his cheerful little bachelor's establishment in Mercer-street, with my old friend and comrade, Henry Archer. Many a frown of fortune had we two weathered out together ; in many of her brightest smiles had we two revelled — never was there a stauncher friend, a merrier companion, a keener sportsman, or a better fellow, than this said Harry ; and here had we two met, three thousand miles from home, after almost ten years of separation, just the same careless, happy,

dare-all do-no-goods that we were when we parted in St. James's-street—he for the West, I for the Eastern World—he to fell trees, and build log huts in the back-woods of Canada,—I to shoot tigers and drink arrack-punch in the Carnatic. The world had wagged with us as with most others—now up, now down, and laid us to, at last, far enough from the goal for which we started ; so that, as I have said already, on landing in New York, having heard nothing of him for ten years, whom the deuce should I tumble on but that same worthy, snugly housed, with a neat bachelor's ménage, and every thing ship-shape about him?—So, in the natural course of things, we were at once inseparables.

Well—as I said before, it ~~was~~ a bright October evening, with the clear sky, rich sunshine, and brisk breezy freshness, which indicate that loveliest of the American months—dinner was over, and with a pitcher of the liquid ruby of Latour, a brace of half-pint beakers, and a score—my contribution—of those most exquisite of smokables, the true old Manilla cheroots, we were consoling the inward man in a way that would have opened the eyes with abhorrent admiration, of any advocate

of that coldest of comforts—cold water—who should have got a chance peep at our snugger.

Suddenly, after a long pause, during which he had been stimulating his ideas by assiduous fumigation, blowing off his steam in a long vapoury cloud that curled a minute afterward about his temples,—“What say you, Frank, to a start to-morrow,” exclaimed Harry, “and a week’s right good shooting?”

“Why, as for that,” said I, “I wish for nothing better—but where the deuce would you go to get shooting?”

“Never fash your beard, man,” he replied; “I’ll find the ground and the game too, so you’ll find share of the shooting! Holloa, there!—Tim! Tim Matlock!”

And in brief space that worthy minister of mine host’s pleasures made his appearance, smoothing down his short black hair, clipped in the orthodox bowl fashion, over his bluff good-natured visage, with one hand, while he employed its fellow in hitching up a pair of most voluminous unmentionables, of thick Yorkshire cord.

A character was Tim—and, now I think of it, worthy of brief description. Born, I believe—

bred, certainly, in a hunting-stable—far more of his life passed in the saddle than elsewhere, it was not a little characteristic of my friend Harry to have selected this piece of Yorkshire oddity as his especial body servant; but if the choice were queer, it was at least successful, for an honest, more faithful, hard-working, and withal better hearted and more humorous varlet never drew currycomb over horse-hide, or clothes-brush over broadcloth.

His visage was, as I have said already, bluff and good-natured, with a pair of hazel eyes of the smallest—but, at the same time, of the very merriest—twinkling from under the thick black eye-brows, which were the only hairs suffered to grace his clean-shaved countenance. An indescribable pug nose, and a good clean-cut mouth, with a continual dimple at the left corner, made up his phiz. For the rest, four feet ten inches did Tim stand in his stockings, about two-ten of which were monopolized by his back, the shoulders of which would have done honour to a six-foot pugilist; his legs, though short, and bowed a little outward by continual horse exercise, were right tough, serviceable members, and I have seen them bearing their owner

on through mud and mire, when straighter, longer, and more fair-proportioned limbs were at an awful discount.

Depositing his hat then on the floor, smoothing his hair, and hitching up his smalls, and striving most laboriously not to grin till he should have cause, stood Tim, like "*Giafar awaiting his master's award!*"

"Tim!" said Harry Archer.

"Sur!" said Tim.

"Tim! Mr. Forester and I are talking of going up to-morrow: what do you say to it?"

"Oop yonner?" queried Tim, in the most extraordinary West-Riding Yorkshire, indicating the direction by pointing his right thumb over his left shoulder. "Weel, Ay'se nought to say about it, not Ay!"

"Soh! the cattle are all right, and the wagon in good trim, and the dogs in exercise, are they?"

"Ay'se warrant um!"

"Well, then, have all ready for a start at six to-morrow,—put Mr. Forester's Manton alongside my Joe Spurling in the top tray of the case, my single gun and my double rifle in the lower,—and see the magazine well filled—the Diamond gun-

powder, you know, from Mr. Brough's. You'll put up what Mr. Forester will want, for a week, you know—he does not know the country yet, Tim;—and, hark you, what wine have I at Tom Draw's?"

"No but a case of claret."

"I thought so,—then away with you! down to the Baron's and get two baskets of the Star, and stop at Foulton Market, and get the best half-hundred round of spiced beef you can find—and then go up to Starke's at the Octagon, and get a gallon of his old Ferintosh. That's all, Tim—off with you!—No! stop a minute!" and he filled up a beaker and handed it to the original, who, shutting both his eyes, suffered the fragrant claret to roll down his gullet in the most scientific fashion, and then, with what he called a bow, turned right about, and exit.

The sun rose bright on the next morning, and half-an-hour before the appointed time, Tim entered my bed-chamber, with a cup of mocha, and the intelligence that "Measter had been up this hour and better, and did na like to be kept waiting!"—so up I jumped, and scarcely had got through the business of rigging myself, before

the rattle of wheels announced the arrival of the wagon.

And a model was that shooting wagon—a long, light-bodied box, with a low rail—a high seat and dash in front, and a low servant's seat behind—with lots of room for four men and as many dogs, with guns and luggage, and all appliances to boot, enough to last a month, stowed away out of sight, and out of reach of weather. The nags, both nearly thorough-bred, fifteen two inches high, stout, clean-limbed, active animals—the off-side horse a gray, almost snow-white—the near, a dark chestnut, nearly black—with square docks setting admirably off their beautiful round quarters, high crests, small blood-like heads, and long thin manes—spoke volumes for Tim's stable science; for though their ribs were slightly visible, their muscles were well filled, and hard as granite. Their coats glanced in the sunshine—the white's like statuary marble; the chestnut's like high-polished copper—in short, the whole turn-out was perfect.

The neat black harness, relieved merely by a crest, with every strap that could be needed, in its place, and not one buckle or one thong super-

fluuous; the bright steel curbs, with the chains jingling as the horses tossed and pawed impatient for a start; the tapering holly whip; the bearskins covering the seats; the top-coats spread above them—every thing, in a word, without bordering on the slang, was perfectly correct and gnostic.

Four dogs—a brace of setters of the light active breed, one of which will out-work a brace of the large, lumpy, heavy-headed dogs,—one red, the other white and liver, both with black noses, their legs and sterns beautifully feathered, and their hair glossy and smooth as silk, showing their excellent condition—and a brace of short-legged, bony, liver-coloured spaniels—with their heads thrust one above the other, over or through the railings, and their tails waving with impatient joy—occupied the after portion of the wagon.

Tim, rigged in plain gray frock, with leathers and white tops, stood, in true tiger fashion, at the horses' heads, with the fore-finger of his right hand resting upon the curb of the gray horse, as with his left he rubbed the nose of the chestnut; while Harry, cigar in mouth, was standing at the wheel, reviewing with a steady and experienced

eye the gear, which seemed to give him perfect satisfaction. The moment I appeared on the steps,—

“In with you, Frank—in with you!” he exclaimed, disengaging the hand-reins from the turrets into which they had been thrust,—“I have been waiting here these five minutes. Jump up, Tim!”

And, gathering the reins up firmly, he mounted by the wheel, tucked the top-coat about his legs, shook out the long lash of his tandem whip, and lapped it up in good style.

“I always drive with one of these”—he said, half apologetically, as I thought—“they are so handy on the road for the cur dogs, when you have setters with you—they plague your life out else. Have you the pistol-case in, Tim, for I don’t see it?”

“All roight, sur,” answered he, not over well pleased, as it seemed, that it should even be suspected that he could have forgotten anything —“All roight!”

“Go along, then,” cried Harry, and at the word the high-bred nags went off; and, though my friend was too good and too old a hand to

worry his cattle at the beginning of a long day's journey, many minutes had not passed before we found ourselves on board the ferry-boat, steaming it merrily toward the Jersey shore.

"A quarter past six to the minute," said Harry, as we landed at Hoboken.

"Let *Shot* and *Chase* run, Tim, but keep the spaniels in till we pass Hackensack."

"Awa wi ye, ye rascals," exclaimed Tim, and out went the high-blooded dogs upon the instant, yelling and jumping in delight about the horses—and off we went, through the long sandy street of Hoboken, leaving the private race-course of that staunch sportsman, Mr. Stevens, on the left, with several powerful horses taking their walking exercise in their neat body-clothes.

"That puts me in mind, Frank," said Harry, as he called my attention to the thorough-breds, "we must be back next Tuesday for the Beacon Races—the new course up there on the hill; you can see the steps that lead to it. And now is not this lovely?" he continued, as we mounted the first ridge of Weehawken, and looked back over the beautiful broad Hudson, gemmed with a thousand snowy sails of craft or shipping—"Is not

this lovely, Frank? And, by the by, you will say, when we get to our journey's end, you never drove through prettier scenery in your life. Get away, Bob, you villain—nibbling, nibbling at your curb! get away, lads!"

And away we went at a right rattling pace over the hills, and through the cedar swamp; and, passing through a toll-gate, stopped with a sudden jerk at a long low tavern on the left-hand side.

"We must stop here, Frank. My old friend Ingliss, a brother trigger, too, would think the world was coming to an end if I drove by. Twenty-nine minutes these six miles," he added, looking at his watch, "that will do! Now, Tim, look sharp—just a sup of water! Good day—good day to you, Mr. Ingliss; now for a glass of your milk-punch"—and mine host disappeared, and in a moment came forth with two rummers of the delicious compound, a big bright lump of ice bobbing about in each among the nutmeg.

"What, off again for Orange county, Mr. Archer? I was telling the old woman yesterday, that we should have you by before long. Well, you'll find cock pretty plenty, I expect; there

was a chap by here from Ulster—let me see, what day was it?—Friday, I guess—with produce, and he was telling, they have had no cold snap yet up there! Thank you, sir, good luck to you!”

And off we went again, along a level road, crossing the broad slow river from whence it takes its name, into the town of Hackensack.

“We breakfast here, Frank”—as he pulled up beneath the low Dutch shed projecting over half the road in front of the neat tavern—“How are you, Mr. Vanderbeck—we want a beef-steak, and a cup of tea, as quick as you can give it us; we’ll make the tea ourselves; bring in the black tea, Tim—the nags as usual.”

“Aye, aye, sur!”—“Tak them out—leave t’har-ness on, all but their bridles”—to an old gray-headed hostler. “Whisp off their legs a bit; Ay will be oot enoo!”

After as good a breakfast as fresh eggs, good country bread, worth ten times the poor trash of city bakers—prime butter, cream, and a fat steak could furnish, at a cheap rate, and with a civil and obliging landlord, away we went again over the red-hills—an infernal ugly road, sandy, and rough, and stony,—for ten miles farther to New Prospect.

"Now you shall see some scenery worth looking at," said Harry, as we started again, after watering the horses, and taking in a bag with a peck of oats—"to feed at three o'clock, Frank, when we stop to grub, which must do *al fresco*—" my friend explained—"for the landlord, who kept the only tavern on the road, went West this summer, bit by the land mania, and there is now no stopping place 'twixt this and Warwick," naming the village for which we were bound. "You got that beef boiled, Tim?"

"Ay'd been a fouil else, and Ay'e so often oop t' road too," answered he with a grin; "and t' moostard is mixed, and t' pilot biscuit in, and a good bit o' Cheshire cheese! wee's doo, Ay reckon. Ha, ha, ha!"

And now my friend's boast was indeed fulfilled; for when we had driven a few miles farther, the country became undulating, with many and bright streams of water; the hill sides clothed with luxuriant woodlands, now in their many-coloured garb of autumn beauty; the meadow land rich in unchanged fresh greenery—for the summer had been mild and rainy—with here and there a buckwheat stubble showing its ruddy face, replete with

promise of quail in the present, and of hot cakes in future; and the bold chain of mountains, which, under many names, but always beautiful and wild, sweeps from the Highlands of the Hudson, west and southwardly, quite through New Jersey, forming a link between the White and Green Mountains of New Hampshire and Vermont, and the more famous Alleghanies of the South.

A few miles farther yet, the road wheeled round the base of the Tourne Mountain, a magnificent bold hill, with a bare craggy head, its sides and skirts thick set with cedars and hickory—entering a defile through which the Ramapo, one of the loveliest streams eye ever looked upon, comes rippling with its crystal waters over bright pebbles, on its way to join the two kindred rivulets which form the fair Passaic. Throughout the whole of that defile, nothing can possibly surpass the loveliness of nature; the road hard, and smooth, and level, winding and wheeling parallel to the gurgling river, crossing it two or three times in each mile, now on one side, and now on the other—the valley now barely broad enough to permit the highway and the stream to pass between the abrupt masses of rock and forest, and now expand-

ing into rich basins of green meadow land, the deepest and most fertile possible—the hills of every shape and size—here bold, and bare, and rocky—there swelling up in grand round masses, pile above pile of verdure, to the blue firmament of autumn. By and by we drove through a thriving little village, nestling in a hollow of the hills, beside a broad bright pond, whose waters keep a dozen manufactories of cotton and of iron—with which mineral these hills abound—in constant operation; and passing by the tavern, the departure of whose owner Harry had so pathetically mourned, we wheeled again round a projecting spur of hill into a narrower defile, and reached another hamlet, far different in its aspect from the busy bustling place we had left some five miles behind.

There were some twenty houses, with two large mills of solid masonry; but of these not one building was now tenanted; the roof-trees broken, the doors and shutters either torn from their hinges, or flapping wildly to and fro; the mill wheels cumbering the stream with masses of decaying timber, and the whole presenting a most desolate and mournful aspect.

"Its story is soon told," Harry said, catching my inquiring glance—"a speculating, clever, New York merchant—a water-power—a failure—and a consequent desertion of the project; but we must find a berth among the ruins!"

And as he spoke, turning a little off the road, he pulled up on the greensward—"There's an old stable here that has a manger in it yet! Now, Tim, look sharp!"

And in a twinkling the horses were loosed from the wagon, the harness taken off and hanging on the corners of the ruined hovels, and Tim hissing and rubbing away at the gray horse, while Harry did like duty on the chestnut, in a style that would have done no shame to Melton Mowbray!

"Come, Frank, make yourself useful! Get out the round of beef, and all the rest of the provant—it's on the rack behind; you'll find all right there. Spread our table-cloth on that flat stone by the waterfall, under the willow; clap a couple of bottles of the Baron's champagne into the pool there underneath the fall; let's see whether your Indian campaigning has taught you any thing worth knowing!"

To work I went at once, and by the time I had

got through—"Come, Tim," I heard him say, "I've got the rough dirt off this fellow, you must polish him, while I take a wash, and get a bit of dinner. Holloa! Frank, are you ready?"

And he came bounding down to the water's edge, with his Newmarket coat in hand and sleeves rolled up to the elbows, plunged his face into the cool stream, and took a good wash of his soiled hands in the same natural basin. Five minutes afterward we were employed most pleasantly with the spiced beef, white biscuit, and good wine, which came out of the waterfall as cool as Gunter could have made it with all his icing. When we had pretty well got through, and were engaged with our cheroots, up came Tim Matlock.

"T" horses have got through wi' t' corn—they have fed rarely—so I harnessed them, sur, all to the bridles—we can start when you will."

"Sit down, and get your dinner then, sir—there's a heel-tap in that bottle we have left for you—and when you have done, put up the things, and we'll be off. I say, Frank, let us try a shot with the pistols—I'll get the case—stick up that fellow-commoner upon the fence there, and mark off a twenty paces."

The marking irons were produced—and loaded—“Fire—one—two—three”—bang! and the shivering of the glass announced that never more would that chap hold the generous liquor—the ball had struck it plump in the centre, and broken off the whole above the shoulder—for it was fixed neck downward on the stake.

“It is my turn now,” said I—and more by luck, I fancy, than by skill, I took the neck off, leaving nothing but the thick ring of the mouth still sticking on the summit of the fence.

“I’ll hold you a dozen of my best Regalias against as many of Manillas, that I break the ring.”

“Done, Harry!”

“Done!”

Again the pistol cracked, and the unerring ball drove the small fragment into a thousand splinters.

“That fatched ’um!” exclaimed Tim, who had come up to announce all ready—“Ecod, measter Frank, you munna wager i’ that gate* wi’ master, or my name beant Tim, but thou’lt be clean bamboozled.”

Well—not to make a short story long—we got

* Gate—Yorkshire; Anglied, *way*.

under weigh again, and with speed unabated, spanked along at full twelve miles an hour, for five miles farther. There, down a wild looking glen, on the left hand, comes brawling, over stump and stone, a tributary streamlet—by the side of which a rough tract, made by the charcoal burners and the iron miners, intersects the main road—and up this miserable looking path—for it was little more—Harry wheeled at full trot.

“Now for twelve miles of mountain, the roughest road and wildest country you ever saw crossed in a phaeton, good master Frank.”

And wild it was, indeed, and rough enough in all conscience—narrow, unfenced in many places, winding along the brow of precipices without rail or breast-work, encumbered with huge blocks of stone, and broken by the summer rains! An English stage coachman would have stared aghast at the steep zigzags up the hills—the awkward turns on the descents—the sudden pitches, with now an unsafe bridge, and now a stony ford at the bottom; but through all this, the delicate quick finger, keen eye, and cool head of Harry, assisted by the rare mouths of his exquisitely bitted cattle, piloted us at the rate of full ten

miles the hour—the scenery through which the wild tract ran being entirely of the most grand and savage character of woodland—the bottom filled with gigantic timber trees, cedar, and pine, and hemlock, with a dense undergrowth of rhododendron, calmia, and azalea, which, as my friend informed me, made the whole mountains in the summer season one rich bed of bloom. About six miles from the point where we had entered them we scaled the highest ridge of the hills by three almost precipitous zigzags, the topmost ledge paved by a stratum of broken shaley limestone; and, passing at once from the forest into well cultivated fields, came on a new and lovelier prospect—a narrow deep vale, scarce a mile in breadth—scooped as it were out of the mighty mountains which embosomed it on every side—in the highest state of culture, with rich orchards and deep meadows, and brown stubbles, whereon the shocks of maize stood fair and frequent—and westward of the road—which, diving down obliquely to the bottom, loses itself in the woods of the opposite hill-side, and only becomes visible again when it emerges to cross over the next summit—the loveliest sheet of water my eye has

ever seen, varying from half-a-mile to a mile in breadth, and about five miles long, with shores indented deeply with the capes and promontories of the wood-clothed hills, which sink abruptly to its very margin.

“That is the Greenwood Lake, Frank, called by the monsters here Long Pond!—‘the fiends receive their souls therefor,’ as Walter Scott says—in my mind prettier than Lake George by far, though known to few except chance sportsmen like myself! Full of fish—perch of a pound in weight, and yellow bass in the deep waters, and a good sprinkling of trout towards this end! Ellis Ketchum killed a five pounder there this spring!—and heaps of summer-duck, the loveliest in plumage of the genus, and the best too, *me judice*, excepting only the inimitable canvass-back. There are a few deer, too, in the hills, though they are getting scarce of late years. There, from that headland, I killed one, three summers since; I was placed at a stand by the lake’s edge, and the dogs drove him right down to me; but I got too eager, and he heard or saw me, and so fetched a turn; but they were close upon him, and the day was hot, and he was forced

to soil. I never saw him till he was in the act of leaping from a bluff of ten or twelve feet into the deep lake, but I pitched up my rifle at him—a snap shot!—as I would my gun at a cock in a summer brake—and by good luck sent my ball through his heart! There is a finer view yet when we cross this hill—the Bellevale mountain—look out, for we are just upon it—there! Now admire!

And on the summit he pulled up, and never did I see a landscape more extensively magnificent. Ridge after ridge the mountain sloped down from our feet into a vast rich basin ten miles at least in breadth, by thirty, if not more, in length, girdled on every side by mountains—the whole diversified with wood and water, meadow, and pasture-land, and corn-field—studded with small white villages—with more than one bright lakelet glittering like beaten gold in the declining sun, and several isolated hills standing up boldly from the vale!

“Glorious indeed! most glorious!” I exclaimed.

“Right, Frank,” he said; “a man may travel many a day, and not see any thing to beat the vale of Sugar-loaf—so named from that cone-like hill, over the pend there—that peak is eight hundred

feet above tide-water. Those blue hills, to the far right, are the Hudson Highlands; that bold bluff is the far-famed Anthony's Nose; that ridge across the vale, the second ridge, I mean, is the Shawangunks; and those three rounded summits, farther yet—those are the Kaatakills! But now a truce with the romantic, for there lies Warwick, and this keen mountain air has found me a fresh appetite!"

Away we went again, rattling down the hills, nothing daunted at their steep pitches, with the nags just as fresh as when they started, champing and snapping at their curbs, till on a table-land above the brook, with the tin steeple of its church peering from out the massy foliage of sycamore and locust, the haven of our journey lay before us.

"Hilloa, hill-oe ho! whoop! who-whoop!" and with a cheery shout, as we clattered across the wooden bridge, he roused out half the population of the village.

"Ya ha ha!—ya yah!" yelled a great woolly-headed coal-black negro. "Here 'm massa Archer back again—massa ben well, I 'spect?"

"Well—to be sure I have, Sam," cried Harry. "How's old Poll? Bid her come up to Draw's

to-morrow night—I've got a red and yellow frock for her—a deuce of a concern!"

"Yah ha! yah ha ha yaah!" and amid a most discordant chorus of African merriment, we passed by a neat farm-house shaded by two glorious locusts on the right, and a new red brick mansion, the pride of the village, with a flourishing store on the left—and wheeled up to the famous Tom Draw's tavern—a long white house with a piazza six feet wide, at the top of eight steep steps, and a one-story kitchen at the end of it; a pump with a gilt pine-apple at the top of it, and horse-trough; a wagon shed and stable sixty feet long; a sign-post with an indescribable female figure swinging upon it, and an ice-house over the way!

Such was the house, before which we pulled up just as the sun was setting, amid a gabbling of ducks, a barking of terriers, mixed with the deep bay of two or three large heavy fox-hounds which had been lounging about in the shade, and a peal of joyous welcome from all beings, quadruped or biped, within hearing.

"Hulloa, boys!" cried a deep hearty voice from within the bar-room. "Hulloa, boys! Walk in, walk in! What the eternal devil are you about there?"

Well, we did walk into a large neat bar-room with a bright hickory log crackling upon the hearth-stone, a large round table in one corner, covered with draught-boards and old newspapers, among which showed pre-eminent the "Spirit of the Times;" a range of pegs well stored with great-coats, fishing-rods, whips, game-bags, spurs, and every other stray appurtenance of sporting, gracing one end; while the other was more gaily decorated by the well furnished bar, in the right-hand angle of which my eye detected in an instant a handsome nine-pound double-barrel, an old six-foot Queen Ann's tower-musket, and a long smooth-bored rifle; and last, not least, outstretched at easy length upon the counter of his bar, to the left-hand of the gangway—the right side being more suitably decorated with tumblers, and decanters of strange compounds—supine, with fair round belly towering upward, and head voluptuously pillowed on a heap of wagon cushions—lay in his glory—but no! hold!—the end of a chapter is no place to introduce—Tom Draw!

It is almost a painful task to read over and revise this chapter. The "ten years ago" is too keenly visible to the mind's eye in every line. Of the persons mentioned in its pages, more

than one have passed away from our world for ever; and even the natural features of rock, wood, and river, in other countries so vastly more enduring than their perishable owners, have been so much altered by the march of improvement,—Heaven save the mark !—that the traveller up that immortal failure, the Erie railroad, will certainly not recognise in the description the vale of Ramapo, the hill-sides all denuded of their leafy honours, the bright streams dammed by unsightly mounds and changed into foul stagnant pools, the snug country tavern deserted for a huge hideous barn-like depôt, and all the lovely sights and sweet harmonies of nature defaced and drowned by the deformities consequent on a railroad, by the disgusting roar and screech of the steam-engine.

One word to the wise ! Let no man be deluded by the following pages, into the setting forth for Warwick *now* in search of sporting. These things are strictly as they were *ten years ago* ! Mr. Seward, in his zeal for the improvement of Chataugue and Cattaraugus, has certainly destroyed the cock-shooting of Orange county. A sportsman's benison to him therefor !

DAY THE SECOND.

MUCH as I had heard of Tom Draw, I was, I must confess, taken altogether aback when I, for the first time, set eyes upon him. I had heard Harry Archer talk of him fifty times as a crack shot; as a top sawyer at a long day's fag; as the man of all others he would choose as his mate, if he were to shoot a match, two against two;—what then was my astonishment at beholding this worthy, as he reared himself slowly from his recumbent position! It is true, I had heard his sobriquet, "Fat Tom;" but, Heaven and earth! such a mass of beef and brandy as stood before me, I had never even dreamed of. About five feet six inches at the very utmost in the perpendicular, by six, or—"by'r lady"—nearer seven, in circumference—weighing, at the least computation, two hundred and fifty pounds—with a broad jolly face, its every feature well-formed and handsome rather than otherwise, mantling

with an expression of the most perfect excellence of heart and temper, and overshadowed by a vast mass of brown hair, sprinkled pretty well with gray!—Down he plumped from the counter with a thud that made the whole floor shake, and, with a hand outstretched that might have done for a Goliath, out he strode to meet us.

“Why, hulloa, hulloa! Mr. Archer,” shaking his hand till I thought he would have dragged the arm clean out of the socket—“How be you, boy! how be you?”

“Right well, Tom, can’t you see? Why, confound you, you’ve grown twenty pound heavier since July!—but here, I’m losing all my manners!—this is Frank Forester, whom you have heard me talk about so often. He dropped down here out of the moon, Tom, I believe; at least, I thought about as much of seeing the man in the moon, as of meeting *him* in this wooden country; but here he is, as you see, come all the way to take a look at the natives. And so, you see, as you’re about the greatest curiosity I know of in these parts, I brought him straight up here to take a peep. Look at him, Frank!—look at him well! Now, did you ever see, in all your life, so

extraordinary an old devil?—and yet, Frank, which no man could possibly believe, the old fat animal has some good points about him: he can walk *some!* shoot, as he says, *first best!* and drink—good Lord, how he can drink!”

“And that reminds me,” exclaimed Tom, who, with a ludicrous mixture of pleasure, bashfulness, and mock anger, had been listening to what he evidently deemed a high encomium, “that *we* hav’n’t dranked yet. Have you quit drink, Archer, since I was to York? What’ll you take, Mr. Forester? Gin?—yes, I have got some prime gin! You never sent me up them groceries, though, Archer. Well, then, here’s luck! What, Yorkshire, is that you? I should ha’ thought, now, Archer, you’d have cleared that lazy Injun out afore this time!”

“Whoy, measter Draa—what ’na loike’s that kind o’ talk?—coom, coom now, where’ll Ay tak t’ things tull?”

“Put Mr. Forester’s box in the bed-room off the parlour; mine upstairs, as usual,” cried Archer. “Look sharp, and get the traps out. Now, Tom, I suppose you have got no supper for us?”

“Cooper, Cooper!—you snooping little devil!” yelled Tom, addressing his second hope, a fine dark-eyed, bright-looking lad of ten or twelve years—“don’t you see Mr. Archer’s come?—away with you, and light the parlour fire; look smart, now, or I’ll cure you! Supper—you’re always eat, eat, eat! or drink, drink,—*drunk!* Yes, supper—we’ve got pork, and chickens—”

“Oh! d—n your pork!” said I; “salt as the ocean, I suppose!”

“And double d—n your chickens!” chimed in Harry; “old superannuated cocks, which must be caught *now*, and then beheaded, and then soused into hot water, to fetch off the feathers, and save you lazy devils the trouble of picking them. No, no, Tom! get us some fresh meat for to-morrow; and for to-night, let us have some hot potatos, and some bread and butter, and we’ll find beef—eh, Frank?—And now look sharp, for we must be up in good time to-morrow, and, to be so, we must to bed betimes. And now, Tom, are there any cock?”

“Cock!—yes, I guess there be, and quail, too, pretty plenty!—quite a smart chance of them, and not a shot fired among them this fall, any how.”

"Well, which way must we beat to-morrow? I calculate to shoot three days with you here, and on Wednesday night, when we get in, to hitch up, and drive into Sullivan, and see if we can't get a deer or two. You'll go, Tom?"

"Well, well, we'll see, any how; but for to-morrow, why, I guess, we must beat the Squire's swamp-hole first—there's ten or twelve cock there, I know—I see them there myself last Sunday; and then acrost them buck-wheat stubbles, and the big bog meadow, there's a *drove* of quail there, two or three bebies got in one, I reckon; least-wise I counted thirty-three last Friday was a week—and through Seer's big swamp, over to the great spring."

"How *is* Seer's swamp? too wet, I fancy," Archer interposed; "at least I noticed from the mountain that all the leaves were changed in it, and that the maples were quite bare."

"Pretty fair, pretty fair, I guess," replied stout Tom; "I harnt been there myself, though, but Jem was down with the hounds arter an old fox t'other day, and sure enough *he said* the cock kept flopping up quite thick afore him; but then the critter *will* lie, Harry,—he *will* lie like the devil,

you know; but somehow I concaits there be cock there, too; and then, as I was saying, we'll stop at the great spring, and get a bite of summat, and then beat Hell-hole; you'll have sport there for sartin! What dogs have you got with you, Harry?"

"Your old friends, Shot and Chase, and a couple of spaniels for thick covert."

"Now, gentlemen, your suppers are all ready."

"Come, Tom," cried Archer, "you must take a bite with us—Tim, bring us in three bottles of champagne, and lots of ice, do you hear?"

And the next moment we found ourselves installed in a snug parlour, decorated with a dozen sporting prints, a blazing hickory fire snapping and sputtering and roaring in a huge Franklin stove, our luggage safely stowed in various corners, and Archer's double gun-case propped on two chairs below the window.

An old-fashioned round table, covered with clean white linen of domestic manufacture, displayed the noble round of beef which we had brought up with us, flanked by a platter of magnificent potatos, pouring forth volumes of dense steam through the cracks in their dusky skins;

a lordly dish of butter that might have pleased the appetite of Sisera; while eggs and ham, and pies of apple, mince-meat, cranberry and custard, occupied every vacant space, save where two ponderous pitchers, mantling with ale and cider, and two respectable square bottles, labelled "Old Rum" and "Brandy — 1817," relieved the prospect. Before we had sat down, Timothy entered, bearing a horse bucket filled to the brim with ice, from whence protruded the long necks and split corks of three champagne bottles.

"Now, Tim," said Archer, "get your own supper, when you've finished with the cattle; feed the dogs well to-night; and then to bed. And hark you, call me at five in the morning; we shall want you to carry the game bag and the drinkables; take care of yourself, Tim, and good night!"

"No need to tell him that," cried Tom; "he's something like yourself: *I tell* you, Archer, if Tim ever dies of thirst, it must be where there is nothing wet but water!"

"Now hark to the old scoundrel, Frank," said Archer, "hark to him, pray, and if he doesn't out-eat both of us, and out-drink any thing you

ever saw, may I miss my first bird to-morrow—that's all! Give me a slice of beef, Frank; that old Goth would cut it an inch thick if I let him touch it. Out with a cork, Tom! Here's to our sport to-morrow!"

"Uh! that goes good!" replied Tom, "that goes good! that's different from the d—d red trash you left up here last time."

"And of which you have *left* none, I'll be bound," answered Archer, laughing; "my best Latour, Frank, which the old infidel calls trash."

"It's all below, every bottle of it," answered Tom; "I wouldn't use such rot-gut stuff, no, not for vinegar. 'Taint half so good as that red sherry you had up here oncet; that was poor weak stuff too, but it did well to make milk-punch of; it did well instead of milk."

"Now, Frank," said Archer, "you won't believe me, *that I know*, but it's true, all the same. A year ago, this autumn, I brought up five gallons of exceedingly stout, rather fiery, young, brown sherry—draught wine, you know!—and what did Tom do here, but mix it, half and half, with brandy, nutmeg, and sugar, and drink it for milk-punch!"

"I did *so*, by the eternal," replied Tom, bolting a huge lump of beef, in order to enable himself to answer—"I did *so*, and good milk-punch it made too, but it was too weak! Come, Mr. Forester, we *harnt* dranked yet, and I'm kind o' gittin dry!"

And now the mirth waxed fast and furious—the champagne speedily was finished, the supper things cleared off, hot water and Starke's Ferintosh succeeded, cheroots were lighted, we drew closer in about the fire, and, during the circulation of two tumblers—for to this did Harry limit us, having the prospect of unsteady hands and aching heads before him for the morrow—never did I hear more genuine and real humour than went round our merry trio.

Tom Draw, especially, though all his jokes were not such altogether as I can venture to insert in my chaste paragraphs, and though at times his oaths were too extravagantly rich to brook repetition, shone forth resplendent. No longer did I wonder at what I had before deemed Harry Archer's strange hallucination; Tom Draw *is* a decided genius—rough as a pine knot in his native woods, but full of mirth, of shrewdness, of

keen mother wit, of hard horse sense, and last, not least, of the most genuine milk of human kindness. He is a rough block; but, as Harry says, there is solid timber under the uncouth bark enough to make five hundred men, as men go now-a-days *in cities!*

At ten o'clock, thanks to the excellent precautions of my friend Harry, we were all snugly berthed, before the whiskey, which had well justified the high praise I had heard lavished on it, had made any serious inroads on our understandings, but not before we had laid in a *quantum* to ensure a good night's rest.

Bright and early was I on foot the next day, but before I had half dressed myself I was assured, by the clatter of the breakfast things, that Archer had again stolen a march upon me; and the next moment my bed-room door, driven open by the thick boot of that worthy, gave me a full view of his person, arrayed in a stout fustian jacket, with half-a-dozen pockets in full view, and Heaven only knows how many more lying *perdu* in the broad skirts. Knee-breeches of the same material, with laced half-boots and leather leggins, set off his stout calf and well turned ankle.

"Up, up, Frank!" he exclaimed, "it is a morning of ten thousand; there has been quite a heavy dew, and by the time we are afoot it will be well evaporated; and then the scent will lie, I promise you! Make haste, I tell you, breakfast is ready!"

Stimulated by his hurrying voice, I soon completed my toilet, and entering the parlour found Harry busily employed in stirring to and fro a pound of powder on one heated dinner plate, while a second was undergoing the process of preparation on the hearth-stone under a glowing pile of hickory ashes.

At the side-table, covered with guns, dog-whips, nipple-wrenches, and the like, Tim, rigged like his master, in half-boots and leggins, but with a short roundabout of velveteen in place of the full-skirted jacket, was filling our shot-pouches by aid of a capacious funnel, more used, as its odour betokened, to facilitate the passage of gin or Jamaica spirits than of so sober a material as cold lead.

At the same moment entered mine host, toggled for the field in a huge pair of cow-hide boots reaching almost to the knee, into the tops of which were tucked the lower ends of a pair of trousers,

containing yards enough of buffalo-cloth to have eked out the mainsail of a North River sloop; a waistcoat and single-breasted jacket of the same material, with a fur cap, completed his attire; but in his hand he bore a large decanter filled with a pale yellowish liquor, embalming a dense mass of fine and worm-like threads, not very different in appearance from the best vermicelli.

"Come, boys, come, here's your bitters," he exclaimed; and, as if to set us the example, filled a big tumbler to the brim, gulped it down as if it had been water, smacked his lips, and incontinently tendered it to Archer, who, to my great amazement, filled himself likewise a more moderate draught, and quaffed it without hesitation.

"That's good, Tom," he said, pausing after the first sip; "that's the best I ever tasted here: how old's that?"

"Five years!" Tom replied; "five years last fall! Daddy Tom made it me out of my own best apples. Take a horn, Mr. Forester," he added, turning to me, "it's *first best* cider sperrits; better a d—n sight than that Scotch stuff you make such an eternal fuss about, toting it up here every time, as if we'd nothing fit to drink in the country!"

And to my sorrow I did taste it—old apple whiskey, with Lord knows how much snake-root soaked in it for five years! They may talk about gall being bitter, but, by all that's wonderful, there was enough of the *amari aliquid* in this *fonte*, to me by no means of *leporum*, to have given an extra touch of bitterness to all the gall beneath the canopy; and with my mouth puckered up, till it was like anything on earth but a mouth, I set the glass down on the table; and for the next five minutes could do nothing but shake my head to and fro like a Chinese mandarin, amidst the loud and prolonged roars of laughter that burst like thunder-claps from the huge jaws of Thomas Draw, and the subdued and half respectful cachinnations of Tim Matlock.

By the time I had got a little better, the black tea was ready, and with thick cream, hot buckwheat cakes, beautiful honey, and—as a stand-by—the still venerable round, we made out a very tolerable meal.

This done, with due deliberation Archer supplied his several pockets with their accustomed load; the clean-punched wads in this—in that the Westley Richards' caps—here a pound horn of powder—there a shot-pouch on Syke's lever prin-

ciple, with double mouth-piece—in another, screw-driver, nipple-wrench, and the spare cones—and, to make up the tale, dog-whip, dram-bottle, and silk handkerchief in the sixth and last.

“Nothing like method in this world,” said Harry, clapping his low-crowned broad-brimmed mohair cap upon his head,—“take my word for it. Now, Tim, what have you got in the bag?”

“A bottle of champagne, sur,” answered Tim, who was now employed slinging a huge fustian game-bag with a net-work front, over his right shoulder, to counterbalance two full shot-belts which were already thrown across the other,—“a bottle of champagne, sur, a cold roast chicken, t’ Cheshire cheese, and t’ pilot biscuits. Is your dram bottle filled wi’ t’ whiskey, please, sur?”

“Aye, aye, Tim! Now let loose the dogs; carry a pair of couples and a leash along with you; and mind you, gentlemen, Tim carries shot for all hands, and luncheon; but each one finds his own powder, caps, &c.; and any one who wants a dram, carries his own—the devil-a-one of you gets a sup out of my bottle, or a charge out of my flask! That’s right, old Trojan, isn’t it?” with a good slap on Tom’s broad shoulders.

“Shot, Shot!—why, Shot! don’t you know me,

old dog?" cried Tom, as the two setters bounded into the room, joyful at their release—"Good dog! good Chase!" feeding them with great lumps of beef.

"Avast there, Tom; have done with that," cried Harry; "you'll have the dogs so full that they can't run!"

"Why, how 'd you like to hunt all day without your breakfast, hey?"

"Here, lads! here, lads! wh-e-ew!" and followed by his setters, with his gun under his arm, away went Harry; and catching up our pieces likewise, we followed, nothing loth, Tim bringing up the rear with the two spaniels fretting in their couples, and a huge blackthorn cudgel, which he had brought, as [he informed me, "all t' way from bonny Cawoods."

It was as beautiful a morning as ever lighted sportsmen to their labours. The dew, exhaled already from the long grass, still glittered here and there upon the shrubs and trees, though a soft fresh south-western breeze was shaking it thence momentarily in bright and rustling showers; the sun, but newly risen, and as yet partially enveloped in the thin gauze-like mists so frequent at that sea-

son, was casting shadows, seemingly endless, from every object that intercepted his low rays, and chequering the whole landscape with that play of light and shade, which is the loveliest accessory to a lovely scene; and lovely was the scene, indeed, as e'er was looked upon by painter's or by poet's eye; how then should humble prose do justice to it?

Seated upon the first slope of a gentle hill, midway of the great valley heretofore described, the village looked due south, toward the chains of mountains which we had crossed on the preceding evening, and which in that direction bounded the landscape. These ridges, cultivated half-way up their swelling sides, which lay mapped out before our eyes in all the various beauty of orchards, yellow stubbles, and rich pastures dotted with sleek and comely cattle, were rendered yet more lovely and romantic, by here and there a woody gorge, or rocky chasm, channelling their smooth flanks, and carrying down their tributary rills, to swell the main stream at their base. Toward these we took our way by the same road which we had followed in an opposite direction on the previous night—but for a short space only—for, having

crossed the stream by the same bridge which we had passed on entering the village, Tom Draw pulled down a set of bars to the left, and strode out manfully into the stubble.

“ Hold up, good lads!—whe-ew—whewt!” and away went the setters through the moist stubble, heads up and sterns down, like fox-hounds on a breast-high scent, yet under the most perfect discipline; for at the very first note of Harry’s whistle, even when racing at the top of their pace, they would turn simultaneously, alter their course, cross each other at right angles, and quarter the whole field, leaving no foot of ground unbeaten.

No game, however, in this instance, rewarded their exertions; and on we went across a meadow, and two other stubbles, with the like result. But now we crossed a gentle hill, and, at its base, came on a level tract, containing at the most ten acres of marsh land, overgrown with high coarse grass and flags. Beyond this, on the right, was a steep rocky hillock, covered with tall and thrifty timber of some thirty years’ growth, but wholly free from underwood. Along the left-hand fence ran a thick belt of underwood, sumach and birch, with a few young oak trees interspersed; but in the middle

of the swampy level, covering at most some five or six acres, was a dense circular thicket composed of every sort of thorny bush and shrub, matted with cat-briers and wild vines, and overshadowed by a clump of tall and leafy ashes, which had not as yet lost one atom of their foliage, although the underwood beneath them was quite sere and leafless.

"Now then," cried Harry, "this is the 'Squire's swamp-hole!' Now for a dozen cock! hey, Tom? Here, couple up the setters, Tim; and let the spaniels loose. Now, Flash! now, Dan! down charge, you little villains!" and the well-broke brutes dropped on the instant. "How must we beat this cursed hole?"

"You must go through the very thick of it, conçarn you!" exclaimed Tom; "at your old work already, hey? trying to shirk at first!"

"Don't swear so, you old reprobate! I know my place, depend on it," cried Archer; "but what to do with the rest of you?—there's the rub!"

"Not a bit of it," cried Tom—"here, York-shire—Ducklegs—here, what's your name—get away you with those big dogs—atwixt the swamp hole and the brush there by the fence, and look

out that you mark every bird to an inch! You, Mr. Forester, go in there, under that butter-nut; you'll find a blind track there, right through the brush—keep that 'twixt Tim and Mr. Archer; and keep your eyes skinned, do! there 'll be a cock up before you're ten yards in. Archer, you'll go right through, and I'll——”

“ You'll keep well forward on the right, and mind that no bird crosses to the hill; we never get them, if they once get over. All right! In with you now! Steady, Flash! steady! hie up, Dan!” and in a moment Harry was out of sight among the brushwood, though his progress might be traced by the continual crackling of the thick underwood.

Scarce had I passed the butter-nut, when, even as Tom had said, up flapped a woodcock scarcely ten yards before me, in the open path, and rising heavily to clear the branches of a tall thorn-bush, showed me his full black eye and tawny breast, as fair a shot as could be fancied.

“ Mark!” holloaed Harry to my right, his quick ear having caught the flap of the bird's wing, as he rose. “ Mark cock—Frank!”

Well—steadily enough, as I thought, I pitched

my gun up! covered my bird fairly! pulled!—the trigger gave not to my finger. I tried the other. “Devil’s in it, I had forgot to cock my gun!” and ere I could retrieve my error, the bird had topped the bush, dodged out of sight, and off. “Mark! mark!—Tim!” I shouted.

“Ey! ey! sur—Ay sees um!”

“Why, how’s that, Frank?” cried Harry. “Couldn’t you get a shot?”

“Forgot to cock my gun!” I cried; but at the selfsame moment the quick sharp yelping of the spaniels came on my ear. “Steady, Flash! steady, sir! Mark!” But close upon the word came the full round report of Harry’s gun. “Mark again!” shouted Harry, and again his own piece sent its loud ringing voice abroad. “Mark! now a third! mark, Frank!”

And as he spoke I caught the quick rush of his wing, and saw him dart across a space, a few yards to my right. I felt my hand shake; I had not pulled a trigger for ten months, but in a second’s space I rallied. There was an opening just before me, between a stumpy thick thorn-bush which had saved the last bird, and a dwarf cedar—it was not two yards over—he glanced across

it! he was gone—just as my barrel sent its charge into the splintered branches.

“Beautiful!” shouted Harry, who, looking through a cross glade, saw the bird fall, which I could not. “Beautiful shot, Frank! Do all your work like that, and we’ll get twenty couple before night!”

“Have I killed him?” answered I, half doubting if he were not quizzing me.

“Killed him? of course you have; doubled him up completely! But look sharp! there are more birds before me! I can hardly keep the dogs down, now! There! there goes one—clean out of shot of me, though! Mark! mark, Tom! Gad, how the fat dog’s running!” he continued. “He sees him! Ten to one he gets him! There he goes—bang! A long shot, and killed clean!”

“Ready!” cried I. “I’m ready, Archer!”

“Bag your bird, then. He lies under that dock leaf, at the foot of yon red maple! That’s it—you’ve got him. Steady now, till Tom gets loaded!”

“What did you do?” asked I. “You fired twice, I think?”

“Killed two,” he answered. “Ready, now!”

and on he went, smashing away the boughs before him, while ever and anon I heard his cheery voice, calling or whistling to his dogs, or rousing up the tenants of some thickets into which even he could not force his way; and I, creeping, as best I might, among the tangled brush, now plunging half-thigh-deep in holes full of tenacious mire, now blundering over the moss-covered stubs, pressed forward, fancying every instant that the rustling of the briers against my jacket was the flip-flap of a rising woodcock. Suddenly, after bursting through a mass of thorns and wild vine, which was in truth almost impassable, I came upon a little grassy spot quite clear of trees, and covered with the tenderest verdure, through which a narrow rill stole silently; and as I set my foot on it, up jumped, with his beautiful variegated back all reddened by the sunbeams, a fine and full-fed woodcock, with the peculiar twitter which he utters when surprised. He had not gone ten yards, however, before my gun was at my shoulder and the trigger drawn—before I heard the crack I saw him cringe; and, as the white smoke drifted off to leeward, he fell heavily, completely riddled by the shot, into the brake

before me—while at the same moment, *whir-r-r!* up sprang a bevy of twenty quail at least, startling me for the moment by the thick whirring of their wings, and skirring over the underwood right toward Archer. “Mark, quail!” I shouted, and recovering instantly my nerves, fired my one remaining barrel after the last bird. It was a long shot, yet I struck him fairly, and he rose instantly right upward, towering high! high! into the clear blue sky, and soaring still, till his life left him in the air, and he fell like a stone, plump downward!

“Mark him, Tim!”

“Ey! ey! sur. He’s a de-ad un, that’s a sure thing!”

At my shot all the bevy rose a little, yet altered not their course the least, wheeling across the thicket directly round the front of Archer, whose whereabouts I knew, though I could neither see nor hear him. So high did they fly that I could observe them clearly, every bird well defined against the sunny heavens. I watched them eagerly. Suddenly one turned over; a cloud of feathers streamed off down the wind; and then, before the sound of the first shot had

reached my ears, a second pitched a few yards upward, and, after a heavy flutter, followed its hapless comrade.

Turned by the fall of the two leading birds, the bevy again wheeled, still rising higher, and now flying very fast; so that, as I saw by the direction which they took, they would probably give Draw a chance of getting in both barrels. And so indeed it was; for, as before, long ere I caught the booming echoes of his heavy gun, I saw two birds keeled over, and, almost at the same instant, the cheery shout of Tim announced to me that he had bagged my towered bird! After a little pause, again we started, and, hailing one another now and then, gradually forced our way through brake and briar toward the outward verge of the dense covert. Before we met again, however, I had the luck to pick up a third woodcock, and as I heard another double shot from Archer, and two single bangs from Draw, I judged that my companions had not been less successful than myself. At last, emerging from the thicket, we all converged, as to a common point, toward Tim; who, with his game-bag on the ground, with its capacious mouth wide open to receive

our game, sat on a stump with the two setters at a charge beside him.

"What do we score?" cried I, as we drew near; "what do we score?"

"I have four woodcock, and a brace of quail," said Harry.

"And I, two cock and a brace," cried Tom, "and missed another cock; but he's down in the meadow here, behind that 'ere stump alder!"

"And I, three woodcock and one quail!" I chimed in, naught abashed.

"And Ay'se marked doon three woodcock—two more beside yon big un, that Measter Draa made siccan a bungle of—and all t' quail—every feather on um—doon i' t' bog meadows yonner—ooh! but we'se mak grand sport o't!" interposed Tim, now busily employed stringing bird after bird up by the head, with loops and buttons in the game-bag.

"Well done then, all!" said Harry. "Nine timber-doodles and five quail, and only one shot missed! That's not bad shooting, considering what a hole it is to shoot in. Gentlemen, here's your health!" and filling himself out a fair sized wine-glass-full of Ferintosh, into the silver cup of

his dram-bottle, he tossed it off; and then poured out a similar libation for Tim Matlock. Tom and myself, nothing loth, obeyed the hint, and sipped our modicums of distilled waters out of our private flasks.

"Now, then," cried Archer, "let us pick up these scattering birds. Tom Draw, you can get yours without a dog. And now, Tim, where are yours?"

"T' first lies up yonner in yon boonch of brachens, ahint t' big scarlet maple; and t' other—"

"Well! I'll go to the first. You take Mr. Forester to the other, and when we have bagged all three, we'll meet at the bog-meadow fence, and then hie at the bevy!"

This job was soon done, for Draw and Harry bagged their birds cleverly at the first rise; and although mine got off at first without a shot, by dodging round a birch tree straight in Tim's face, and flew back slap toward the thicket, yet he pitched in its outer skirt, and as he jumped up wild, I cut him down with a broken pinion and a shot through his bill at fifty yards, and Chase retrieved him well.

"Cleverly stopped, indeed!" Frank halloaed;

"and by no means an easy shot! and so our work's clean done for this place, at the least."

"The boy *can* shoot *some*," observed Tom Draw, who loved to bother Timothy; "the boy *can* shoot *some*, though he *doos* come from Yorkshire!"

"God! and Ay wush Ay'd no but gotten thee i' Yorkshire, measter Draa!" responded Tim.

"Why! what if you had got me there?"

"What? Whoy, Ay'd clap thee iv a cage, and hug thee round to t' feasts and fairs loike; and show thee to t' folks at so mooch a head. Ay'se sure Ay'd mak a fortune o' t!"

"He has you there, Tom! Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Archer. "Tim's down upon you there, by George! Now, Frank, do fancy Tom Draw in a cage at Boroughbridge or Catterick fair! Lord! how the folks would pay to look at him! Fancy the sign-board too! The great American Man-mammoth! Ha, ha, ha! But come, we must not stay here talking nonsense, or we shall do no good. Show me, Tim, where are the quail?"

"Doon i' t' bog meadow yonner! joost i' t' slack,* see thee, there!" pointing with the stout black-thorn; "amang yon bits o' bushes!"

* Slack—Yorkshire; Anglice, *moist hollow*.

“Very well—that’s it; now let go the setters; take Flash and Dan along with you, and cut across the country as straight as you can go to the spring-head, where we lunched last year; that day, you know, Tom, when McTavish frightened the bull out of the meadow, under the pin-oak tree. Well, put the champagne into the spring to cool, and rest yourself there till we come; we shan’t be long behind you.”

Away went Tim, stopping from time to time to mark our progress, and over the fence into the bog meadow we proceeded; a rascally piece of broken tussocky ground, with black mud knee-deep between the hags, all covered with long grass. The third step I took, over I went upon my nose, but luckily avoided shoving my gun-barrels into the filthy mire.

“Steady, Frank, steady! I’m ashamed of you!” said Harry; “so hot and so impetuous; and your gun too at the full cock; that’s the reason, man, why you missed firing at your first bird, this morning. I never cock either barrel till I see my bird; and, if a bevy rises, only one at a time. The birds will lie like stones here; and we cannot walk too slow. Steady, Shot, have a care, sir!”

Never, in all my life, did I see any thing more

perfect than the style in which the setters drew those bogs. There was no more of racing, no more of impetuous dash: it seemed as if they knew the birds were close before them. At a slow trot, their sterns whipping their flanks at every step, they threaded the high tussocks. See! the red dog straightens his neck, and snuffs the air.

“Look to! look to, Frank! they are close before old Chase!”

Now he draws on again, crouching close to the earth. “Toho! Shot!” Now he stands! no! no! not yet—at least he is not certain! He turns his head to catch his master’s eye! Now his stern moves a little—he draws on again!

There! he is sure now! what a picture!—his black full eye intently glaring, though he cannot see anything in that thick mass of herbage; his nostril wide expanded, his lips slaving from intense excitement; his whole form motionless, and sharply drawn, and rigid, even to the straight stern and lifted foot, as a block wrought to mimic life by some skilful sculptor’s chisel; and, scarce ten yards behind, his liver-coloured comrade backs him—as firm, as stationary, as immovable, but in his attitude how different! Chase feels the hot

scent steaming up under his very nostril; feels it in every nerve, and quivers with anxiety to dash on his prey, even while perfectly restrained and steady. Shot, on the contrary, though a few minutes since he too was drawing, knows nothing of himself, perceives no indication of the game's near presence, although, improved by discipline, his instinct tells him that his mate has found them. Hence the same rigid form, stiff tail, and constrained attitude; but in his face—for dogs *have* faces—there is none of that tense energy, that evident anxiety: there is no frown upon his brow, no glare in his mild open eye, no slaver on his lip!

“Come up, Tom; come up, Frank; they are all here: we must get in six barrels: they will not move—come up, I say!”

“And on we came, deliberately prompt, and ready. Now we were all in a line: Harry the centre man, I on the right, and Tom on the left hand. The attitude of Archer was superb; his legs, set a little way apart, as firm as if they had been rooted in the soil; his form drawn back a little, and his head erect, with his eye fixed upon the dogs; his gun held in both hands, across his person, the muzzle slightly elevated, his left grasp-

ing the trigger guard, the thumb of the right resting upon the hammer, and the fore-finger on the trigger of the left-hand barrel; but, as he had said, neither cocked. "Fall back, Tom, if you please, five yards or so," he said, as coolly as if he were completely unconcerned, "and you come forward, Frank, as many; I want to drive them to the left, into those low red bushes—that will do—now then, I'll flush them—never mind me, boys, I'll reserve my fire."

And, as he spoke, he moved a yard or two in front of us, and under his very feet, positively startling me by their noisy flutter, up sprang the gallant bevy—fifteen or sixteen well-grown birds, crowding and jostling one against the other. Tom Draw's gun, as I well believe, was at his shoulder when they rose; at least his first shot was discharged before they had flown half a rood, and of course, harmlessly—the charge must have been driven through them like a single ball; his second barrel instantly succeeded, and down came two birds, caught in the act of crossing. I am myself a quick shot, *too* quick if any thing, yet my first barrel was exploded a moment after Tom Draw's second; the other followed, and I had the satis-

faction of bringing both my birds down handsomely: then up went Harry's piece—the bevy being now twenty or twenty-five yards distant—cocking it as it rose, he pulled the trigger almost before it touched his shoulder, so rapid was the movement; and, though he lowered the stock a little to cock the second barrel, a moment scarcely passed between the two reports, and almost on the instant two quail were fluttering out their lives among the bog grass.

Dropping his butt, without a word, or even a glance to the dogs, he quietly went on to load; nor indeed was it needed! at the first shot they dropped into the grass, and there they lay as motionless as if they had been dead, with their heads crouched between their paws; nor did they stir thence till the tick of the gun-locks announced that we again were ready. Then lifting up their heads, and rising on their fore-feet, they set half-erect, eagerly waiting for the signal.

“Hold up, good lads!” and on they drew, and in an instant pointed on two several birds. “Fetch!” and each brought his burden to our feet; six birds were bagged at that rise; and thus before eleven o'clock we had picked up a

dozen cock, and within one of the same number of fine quail, with only two shots missed. The poor remainder of the bevy had dropped, singly and scattered, in the red bushes, whither we instantly pursued them, and where we got six more, making a total of seventeen birds bagged out of a bevy twenty strong at first.

One towered bird of Harry's, certainly killed dead, we could not with all our efforts bring to bag;—one bird Tom Draw missed clean, and the remaining one we could not find again. Another dram of whiskey, and into Seer's great swamp we started—a large piece of woodland, with every kind of lying. At one end it was open, with soft black loamy soil, covered with docks and colts-foot leaves under the shade of large but leafless willows, and here we picked up a good many scattered woodcock; afterward we got into the heavy thicket with much tangled grass, wherein we flushed a bevy, but they all took to tree, and we made very little of them—and here Tom Draw began to blow and labour—the covert was too thick, the bottom too deep and unsteady for him.

Archer perceiving this, sent him at once to the outside; and three times, as we went along, our-

selves moving nothing, we heard the round reports of his large calibre. "A bird at every shot, I'd stake my life," said Harry; "he never misses cross shots in the open!"—at the same instant, a tremendous rush of wings burst from the heaviest thicket—"Mark! partridge! partridge!" and as I caught a glimpse of a dozen large birds fluttering up, one close upon the other, and darting away as straight and nearly as fast as bullets, through the dense branches of a cedar brake, I saw the flashes of both Harry's barrels, almost simultaneously discharged, and at the same time over went the objects of his aim; but ere I could get up my gun the rest were out of sight. "You must shoot, Frank, like lightning to kill these beggars—they are the ruffed grouse, though they call them partridge here—see! are they not fine fellows?"

Another hour's beating, in which we still kept picking up, from time to time, some scattering birds, brought us to the spring-head, where we found Tim with luncheon ready, and our fat friend reposing at his side, with two more partridge, and a rabbit which he had bagged along the covert's edge. Cool was the Star champagne; and capital was the cold fowl and Cheshire cheese; and most

delicious was the repose that followed, enlivened with gay wit and free good humour, soothed by the fragrance of the exquisite cheroots, moistened by the last drops of the Ferintosh qualified by the crystal waters of the spring. After an hour's rest, we counted up our spoil; four ruffed grouse, nineteen woodcock, with ten brace and a half of quail besides the bunny, made up our score—done comfortably in four hours.

“Now we have finished for to-day with quail,” said Archer, “but we’ll get full ten couple more of woodcock. Come, let us be stirring—hang up your game-bag in the tree, and tie the setters to the fence; I want you in with me to beat, Tim—you two chaps must both keep the outside—you all the time, Tom; you, Frank, till you get to that tall thunder-shivered ash tree; turn in there, and follow up the margin of a wide slank you will see; but be careful, the mud is very deep, and dangerous in places!—now then, here goes!”

And in he went, jumping a narrow streamlet into a point of thicket, through which he drove by main force. Scarce had he got six yards into the brake, before both spaniels quested; and, to my

no small wonder, the jungle seemed alive with woodcock—eight or nine, at the least, flapped up at once, and skimmed along the tongue of coppice toward the high wood, which ran along the valley, as I learned afterward, for full three miles in length—while four or five more wheeled off to the sides, giving myself and Draw fair shots, by which we did not fail to profit; but I confess it was with absolute astonishment that I saw two of those turned over which flew inward, killed by the marvellously quick and unerring aim of Archer, where a less thorough sportsman would have been quite unable to discharge a gun at all, so dense was the tangled jungle. Throughout the whole length of that skirt of coppice, a hundred and fifty yards, I should suppose, at the utmost, the birds kept rising as it were incessantly—thirty-five, or, I think, nearly forty, being flushed in less than twenty minutes—although comparatively few were killed, partly from the difficulty of the ground, and partly from their getting up by fours and fives at once. Into the high wood, however, at the last we drove them; and there, till daylight failed us, we did our work like men! By the cold light of the full moon we wended

homeward, rejoicing in the possession of twenty-six couple and a half of cock, twelve brace of quail—we found another bevy on our way home, and bagged three birds almost by moonlight—five ruffed grouse, and a rabbit. Before our wet clothes were well changed, supper was ready, and a good blow-out was followed by sound slumbers and sweet dreams, fairly earned by nine hours of incessant walking.

DAY THE THIRD.

So thoroughly was I tired out by the effects of the first day's fagging I had undergone in many months, and so sound was the slumber into which I sank the moment my head touched the pillow, that it scarcely seemed as if five minutes had elapsed between my falling into sweet forgetfulness, and my starting bolt upright in bed, aroused by the vociferous shout and ponderous trampling—equal to nothing less than that of a full-grown rhinoceros—with which Tom Draw rushed, long before the sun was up, into my chamber.

“What's this? what's this now?” he exclaimed; “why the d—l ar'n't you up and ready?—why here's the bitters mixed, and Archer in the stable this half hour past, and Jem's here with the hounds—and you, you lazy snorting Injun, wasting the morning here in bed!”

My only reply to this most characteristic salutation, was to hurl my pillow slap in his face, and

threatening to follow up the missile with the contents of the water pitcher, which stood temptingly within my reach, if he did not get out incontinently—to jump up and array myself with all due speed; for, when I had collected my bewildered thoughts, I well remembered that we had settled on a fox-hunt before breakfast, as a preliminary to a fresh skirmish with the quail.

In a few minutes I was on foot and in the parlour, where I found a bright crackling fire, a mighty pitcher of milk-punch, and a plate of biscuit, an apt substitute for breakfast before starting; while, however, I was discussing these, Archer arrived, dressed just as I have described him on the preceding day, with the addition of a pair of heavy hunting spurs, buckled on over his half-boots, and a large iron-hammered whip in his right hand.

“That’s right, Frank!” he exclaimed, after the ordinary salutations of the morning. “Why, that old porpoise told me you would not be ready these two hours; he’s grumbling out yonder by the stable door, like a hog stuck in a farm-yard gate. But come, we may as well be moving, for the hounds are all uncoupled, and

the nags saddled—put on a pair of straps to your fustian trowsers, and take these racing spurs, though Peacock does not want them—and now, hurrah !”

This was soon done, and going out upon the stoop, a scene, it is true, widely different from the kennel door at Melton, or the covert side at Billesdon Coplow, yet not by any means devoid of interest or animation, presented itself to my eyes. About six couple of large heavy hounds, with deep and pendant ears, heavy well-feathered sterns, broad chests, and muscular strong limbs, were gathered round their feeder, the renowned Jem Lyn ; on whom it may not be impertinent to waste a word or two, before proceeding to the mountain, which, as I learned, to my no little wonder, was destined to be our hunting ground.

Picture to yourself, then, gentle reader, a small but actively formed man, with a face of most unusual and portentous ugliness, an uncouth grin doing the part of a smile ; a pair of eyes so small that they would have been invisible, but for the serpent-like vivacity and brightness with which they sparkled from their deep sockets ; and a profusion of long hair, coal-black, but lank and

uncurled as an Indian's, combed smoothly down, with a degree of care entirely out of keeping with the other details, whether of dress or countenance, on either cheek. Above these sleek and cherished tresses he wore a thing which might have passed for either cap or castor, at the wearer's pleasure; for it was wholly destitute of brim except for a space some three or four inches wide over the eyebrows; and the crown had been so pertinaciously and completely beaten in, that the sides sloped inward at the top as if to personate a bishop's mitre; a fishing line was wound about this graceful and, if its appearance belied it not most foully, odoriferous head-dress; and into the fishing line was stuck the bowl and some two inches of the shank of a well-sooted pipe. An old red handkerchief was twisted ropewise about his lean and scraggy neck, but it by no means sufficed to hide the scar of what had evidently been a most appalling gash, extending right across his throat, almost from ear to ear; the great cicatrix clearly visible like a white line through the thick stubble of some ten days' standing that graced his chin and neck.

An old green coat, the skirts of which had long

since been docked by the encroachment of thorn-bushes and cat-briars, with a mouth-piece of a powder-horn peeping from its breast pocket, and a full shot-belt crossing his right shoulder ; a pair of fustian trowsers patched at the knees with corduroy, and heavy cowhide boots, completed his attire. This, as it seemed, was to be our huntsman ; and sooth to say, although he did not look the character, he played the part, when he got to work, right handsomely. At a more fitting season, Harry in a few words let me into this worthy's history and disposition. "He is," he said, "the most incorrigible rascal I ever met with, an unredeemed and utter vagabond ; he started life as a stallion-leader, a business which he understands, as in fact he does almost every thing else within his scope, thoroughly well. He got on prodigiously ;—was employed by the first breeders in the country ;—took to drinking, and then, in due rotation, to gambling, pilfering, lying, every vice, in short, which is compatible with utter want of any thing like moral sense, deep shrewdness, and uncommon cowardice.

"He cut his throat once—you may see the scar now—in a fit of *delirium tremens*, and Tom Draw

—who, though he is perpetually cursing him for the most lying critter under heaven, has, I believe, a sort of fellow-feeling for him—nursed him and got him well; and ever since he has hung about here, getting at times a country stallion to look after, **at** others hunting, or fishing, or doing little jobs about the stable, for which Tom gives him plenty of abuse, plenty to eat, and as little rum as possible, for if he gets a second glass it is all up with Jem Lyn for a week at least.

“ He came to see me once in New York, when I was down upon my back with a broken leg; I was lying in the parlour, about three weeks after the accident had happened. Tim Matlock had gone out for something, and the cook let him in; and, after he had sat there about half-an-hour, telling me all the news of the races, and making me laugh more than was good for my broken leg, he gave me such a hint, that I was compelled to direct him to the cupboard, wherein I keep the liquor-stand; and, unluckily enough, as I had not for some time been in drinking tune, all three of the bottles were brimful; and, as I am a Christian man, he drank, in spite of all that I could say—I could not leave the couch to get at him—two of

them to the dregs, and, after frightening me almost to death, fell flat upon the floor, and lay there, fast asleep, when Tim came in again. He dragged him instantly, by my directions, under the pump in the garden, and soused him for about two hours, but without producing the least effect, except eliciting a grunt or two from this most seasoned cask.

“ Such is Jem Lyn, and yet, absurd to say, I have tried the fellow, and believe him perfectly trustworthy—at least *to me*.

“ He is a coward, yet I have seen him fight like a hero, more than once, and against heavy odds, to save me from a thrashing, which I got after all, though not without some damage to our foes, whose name might have been legion.

“ He is the greatest liar I ever met with; and yet I never caught him in a falsehood, for he believes it is no use to tell me one.

“ He is most utterly dishonest, yet I have trusted him with sums that would, in his opinion, have made him a rich man for life, and he accounted to the utmost shilling; but I advise you not to try the same, for if you do he most assuredly will cheat you !”

Among the heavy-looking hounds which clustered round this hopeful gentleman, I quickly singled out two couple of widely different breed and character from the rest; your thorough high-bred racing fox-hounds, with ears rounded, thin shining coats, clean limbs, and all the marks of the best class of English hounds.

“Aye, Frank!” said Archer, as he caught my eye fixed on them, “you have found out my favourites. Why, Bonny Belle, good lass, why Bonny Belle!—here Blossom, Blossom! come up and show your pretty figures to your countryman. Poor Hanbury!—do you remember, Frank, how many a merry day we’ve had with him by Thorley Church and Takely Forest?—poor Hanbury sent them to me with *such* a letter, only the year before he died; and those, Dauntless and Dangerous, I had from Will, Lord Harewood’s huntsman, the same season.”

“There never was sich dogs—there never was afore in Orange,” said Tom. “I *will* say that, though they be English, and though they be too fast for fox, entirely, there never was sich dogs for deer—”

“But how the deuce,” I interrupted, “can

hounds be too fast, if they have bone and staunchness?"

"Staunchness be d—d! they holes them."

"No earth-stoppers in these parts, Frank," cried Harry; "and as the object of these gentlemen is not to hunt solely for the fun of the thing, but to destroy a noxious varmint, they prefer a slow, sure, deep-mouthed dog, that does not press too closely on pug, but lets him take his time about the coverts, till he comes into fair gunshot of these hunters, who are lying perdu as he runs to get a crack at him."

"And pray," said I, "is this *your* method of proceeding?"

"You shall see, you shall see. Come, get to horse, or it will be late before we get our breakfasts, and I assure you I don't wish to lose either that or my day's quail-shooting. This hunt is merely for a change, and to get something of an appetite for breakfast. Now, Tim, be sure that everything is ready by eight o'clock at the latest; we shall be in by that time with a furious appetite."

Thus saying he mounted, without more delay, his favourite, the gray; while I backed, nothing

loth, the chestnut horse ; and at the same time, to my vast astonishment, from under the long shed out rode the mighty Tom, bestriding a tall powerful brown mare, showing a monstrous deal of blood combined with no slight bone, equipped with a cavalry bridle, and, strange to say, *without* the universal martingal ; he was rigged just as usual, with the exception of a broad-brimmed hat in place of his fur cap, and grasped in his right-hand a heavy smooth-bored rifle, while with the left he wheeled his mare with a degree of active skill which I should certainly have looked for any where rather than in so vast a mass of flesh as that which was exhibited by our worthy host.

Two other sportsmen, grave, sober-looking farmers, whom Harry greeted cheerily by name, and to whom, in all due form, I was next introduced, well-mounted, and armed with long single-barrelled guns, completed our party ; and away we went at a rattling trot, the hounds following at Archer's heels as steadily as though he hunted them three times a-week.

" Now, arn't it a strange thing," said Tom, " arn't it a strange thing, Mr. Forester, that every critter under heaven takes somehow nat'rally

to that are Archer; the very hounds, old Whino, there, that I have had these eight years, and fed with my own hands, and hunted steady every winter, quits me the very moment he claps sight on him. By the eternal, I believe he is half dog himself!"

"You *hunted* them, indeed!" interrupted Harry; "you old rhinoceros, why, hang your hide, you never so much as heard a good view-holloa till I came up here!—you *hunted* them!—a man talk of hunting, that carries a cannon about with him on horseback!—but come, where are we to try first, on Rocky Hill, or in the Spring Swamps?"

"Why, now I reckon, Archer, we'd best step down to Sam Blain's—by the blacksmith's—he was telling t' other morning of an eternal sight of them he'd seen down hereaway—and we'll be there to rights!—Jem, curse you, out of my way, you dumb nigger—out of my way, or I'll ride over you"—for, travelling along at a strange shambling run, that worthy had contrived to keep up with us, though we were going fully at the rate of eight or nine miles in an hour.

"Hurrah!" cried Tom, suddenly pulling up at the door of a neat farm-house on the brow of a

hill, with a clear streamlet sweeping round its base, and a fine piece of woodland at the farther side. "Hurrah! Sam Blain, we've come to make them foxes, you were telling of a-Sunday, smell h—ll right straight away. Here's Archer, and another Yorker with him—leastwise an Englisher I should say—and Squire Conklin, and Bill Speers, and that white nigger Jem! Look sharp, I say! Look sharp, d—n you, else we'll pull off the ruff of the old humstead."

In a few minutes Sam made his appearance, armed, like the rest, with a Queen Ann's tower-musket.

"Well, well!" he said, "I'm ready. Quit making such a clatter! Lend me a load of powder, one of you; my horn's leaked dry, I reckon!"

Tom forthwith handed him his own, and the next thing I heard was Blain exclaiming that it was "desperate pretty powder," and wondering if it shot strong.

"Shoot strong? I guess you'll find it strong enough to sew you up, if you go charging your old musket that ways!" answered Tom. "By the Lord, Archer, he's put in three full charges!"

"Well, it will kill him, that's all!" answered

Harry, very coolly; "and there'll be one less of you. But come! come! let's be bustling; the sun's going to get up already. You'll leave your horses here, I suppose, gentlemen, and get to the old stands. Tom Draw, put Mr. Forester at my old post down by the big pin-oak at the creek side; and you stand there, Frank, still as a church-mouse. It's ten to one, if some of these fellows don't shoot him first, that he'll break covert close by you, and run the meadows for a mile or two, up to the turnpike road, and over it to Rocky Hill—that black knob yonder, covered with pine and hemlock. There are some queer snake fences in the flat, and a big brook or two, but Peacock has been over every inch of it before, and you may trust in him implicitly. Good by! I'm going up the road with Jem, to drive it from the upper end."

And off he went at a merry trot, with the hounds gamboling about his stirrups, and Jem Lyn running at his best pace to keep up with him. In a few minutes they were lost behind a swell of woodland, round which the road wheeled suddenly. At the same moment Tom and his companions reappeared from the stables, where they had been

securing their four-footed friends; and, after a few seconds, spent in running ramrods down the barrels to see that all was right, inspecting primings, knapping flints, or putting on fresh copper caps, it was announced that all was ready; and passing through the farm-yard, we entered, through a set of bars, a broad bright buckwheat stubble. Scarcely an hundred yards had we proceeded, before up sprang the finest bevy of the largest quail I had yet seen, and flying high and wild crossed half-a-dozen fields in the direction of the village whence we had started, and pitched at length into an alder brake beside the stream.

“Them chaps has gone the right way,” Tom exclaimed, with a deep sigh, who had with wondrous difficulty refrained from firing into them, though he was loaded with buckshot; “right in the course we count to take this forenoon. Now, Squire, keep to the left *here*, take your station by the old earths there away, under the tall dead pine; and you, Bill, make tracks *there*, straight through the middle cart-way, down to the other meadow, and sit you down right where the two streams fork; there’ll be an old red snooping down that side afore long, I reckon. We’ll go on, Mr.

Forester; here's a big rail fence now; I'll throw off the top rail, for I'll be darned if I climb any day when I can creep—there, that'll do, I reckon: leastwise if you can ride like Archer—he d—ns me always if I so much as shakes a fence afore he jumps it—you've got the best horse, too, for leaping. Now let's see! Well done! well done!" he continued, with a most boisterous burst of laughter—"well done, *horse*, any how!"—as Peacock, who had been chafing ever since he parted from his comrade Bob, went at the fence as though he were about to take it in his stroke—stopped short when within a yard of it, and then bucked over it, without touching a splinter, although it was at least five feet, and shaking me so much, that, greatly to Tom's joy, I showed no little glimpse of daylight.

"I reckon if they *run* the meadows, you'll hardly *ride* them, Forester," he grinned; "but now away with you. You see the tall dark pin-oak, it hasn't lost one leaf yet; right in the nook there of the bars you'll find a quiet shady spot, where you can see clear up the rail fence to this knob, where I'll be. Off with you, boy—and mind you now, you keep as dumb as the old

woman "when her husband cut her tongue out, 'cause she had too much jaw."

Finishing his discourse, he squatted himself down on the stool of a large hemlock, which, being recently cut down, cumbered the woodside with its giant stem, and secured him, with its evergreen top now lowly laid and withering, from the most narrow scrutiny; while I, giving the gallant horse his head, went at a brisk hand-gallop across the firm short turf of the fair sloping hill-side, taking a moderate fence in my stroke, which Peacock cleared in a style that satisfied me Harry had by no means exaggerated his capacity to act as hunter, in lieu of the less glorious occupation, to which in general he was doomed.

In half a minute more I reached my post, and though an hour passed before I heard the slightest sound betokening the chase, never did I more thoroughly enjoy an hour.

The loveliness of the whole scene before me—the broad rich sweep of meadow land lying, all bathed in dew, under the pale gray light of an autumnal morning, with groups of cattle couched still beneath the trees where they had passed the night; the distant hills, veiled partially in mist,

partially rearing their round leafy heads toward the brightening sky; and then the various changes of the landscape, as slowly the day broke behind the eastern hill; and all the various sounds of bird, and beast, and insect, which each succeeding variation of the morning served to call into life as if by magic. First a faint rosy flush stole up the eastern sky, and nearly at the self-same moment, two or three vagrant crows came flapping heavily along, at a height so immeasurable that their harsh voices were by distance modified into a pleasing murmur. And now a little fish jumped in the streamlet; and the splash, trifling as it was, with which he fell back on the quiet surface, half startled me.

A moment afterward an acorn plumped down on my head, and, as I looked up, there sat, on a limb not ten feet above me, an impudent rogue of a gray squirrel, half as big as a rabbit, erect upon his haunches, working away at the twin brother of the acorn he had dropped upon my hat to break my reverie, rasping it audibly with his chisel-shaped teeth, and grinning at me just as coolly as though I were a harmless scarecrow.

When I grew tired of observing him, and

looked toward the sky again, behold, the western ridge, which is far higher than the eastern hills, had caught upon its summits the first bright rays of the yet unseen day-god ; while the rosy flush of the east had brightened into a blaze of living gold, exceeded only by the glorious hues with which a few slight specks of misty cloud glowed out against the azure firmament, like coals of actual fire.

Again a louder splash aroused me ; and as I turned, there floated on a glassy basin, into which the ripples of a tiny fall subsided, three wood-ducks with a noble drake, that loveliest in plumage of all aquatic fowl, perfectly undisturbed and fearless, although within ten yards of their most dreaded enemy.

How beautiful are all their motions ! There ! one has reared herself half way out of the water ; another stretches forth a delicate web foot to scratch her ear, as handily as a dog on dry land ; and now the drake reflects his purple neck to preen his ruffled wing, and now—bad luck to you, Peacock, why did you snort and stamp?—they are off like a bullet, and out of sight in an instant.

And now out comes the sun himself, and with him the accursed hum of a musquito—and hark! hush!—what was that?—was it—By Heavens! it was the deep note of a fox-hound! Aye! there comes Harry's cheer, faintly heard, swelling up the breeze.

“Have at him, there! Ha-a-ve at him, good lads!”

Again! again! those are the musical deep voices of the slow hounds! They have a dash in them of the old Southern breed! And now! there goes the yell! the quick sharp yelping rally of those two high-bred bitches.

By heaven! they must be viewing him! How the woods ring and crash!

“Togather hark! Togather hark! Togather! For-ra-ard, good lads, get for-a-ard! Hya-a-araway!”

Well halloaed, Harry! I could swear to that last screech out of ten thousand, though it is near ten years since I last heard it! But heavens, how they press him! Hang it! there goes a shot—the squire has fired at him, as he tried the earths! Now, if he have but missed him, and Pan, the god of hunters send it so, he has no chance but to try the open.

"By Jove he has! he must have missed! for Bonny Belle and Blossom are raving half a mile this side of him already. And now Tom sees him—how quietly he steals up to the fence. There! he has fired! and all our sport is up! No! no! he waves his hat and points this way! Can he have missed? No! he has got a fox!—he lifts it out by the brush—there must have been two, then, on foot together. He has done well to get that he has killed away, or they would have stopped on him!

Hush! the leaves rustle here beside me, with a quick patter—the twigs crackle—it is he! Move not! not for your life, Peacock! There! he has broken cover fairly! Now he is half across the field! he stops to listen! Ah! he will head back again. No! no! that crash, when they came upon the warm blood, has decided him—away he goes, with his brush high, and its white tag brandished in the sunshine—now I may halloa him away.

"Whoop! gone awa-ay! whoop!"

I was answered on the instant by Harry's quick—

"Hark holloa! get awa-ay! to him hark! to him hark! hark holloa!"

Most glorious Artemis, what heaven stirring music! And yet there are but six poor couple; the scent must be as hot as fine, for every hound seems to have twenty tongues, and every leaf an hundred echoes! How the boughs crash again! Lo! they are here! Bonny Belle leading—head and stern up, with a quick panting yelp! Blossom, and Dangerous, and Dauntless, scarcely a length behind her, striving together, neck and neck; and, by St. Hubert, it must be a scent of twenty thousand, for here these heavy Southrons are scarcely two rods behind them.

But fidget not, good Peacock! fret not, most excellent Pythagoras! one moment more, and I am not the boy to balk you. And here comes Harry on the gray; by George! he makes the brushwood crackle! Now for a nasty leap out of the tangled swamp! a high six-barred fence of rough trees, leaning toward him, and up hill! surely he will not try it!

Will he not, though?

See!—his rein is tight yet easy! his seat, how beautiful, how firm, yet how relaxed and graceful! Well done, indeed! He slacks his rein one instant as the gray rises! the rugged rails are cleared, and the firm pull supports him! but

Harry moves not in the saddle—no not one hair's breadth! A five-foot fence to him is nothing! You shall not see the slightest variation between his attitude in that strong effort, and in the easy gallop. If Tom Draw saw him now, he could have some excuse for calling him "*half horse*," and he does see him! hark to that most unearthly yell! like unto nothing, either heavenly or human! He waves his hat and hurries back as fast as he is able to the horses, well knowing that, for pedestrians at least, the morning's sport is ended.

Harry and I were now almost abreast, riding in parallel lines down the rich valley, very nearly at the top speed of our horses; taking fence after fence in our stroke, and keeping well up with the hounds, which were running almost mute, such was the furious speed to which the blazing scent excited them.

We had already passed above two-thirds of the whole distance that divides the range of woods, wherein we found him, and the pretty village which we had constituted our head quarters, a distance of at least three miles; and now a very difficult and awkward obstacle presented itself to

our farther progress, in the shape of a wide yawning brook between sheer banks of several feet in height, broken, with rough and pointed stones, the whole being at least five yards across. The gallant hounds dashed over it; and, when we reached it, were half-way across the grass field next beyond it.

"Hold him hard, Frank," Harry shouted; "hold him hard, man, and cram him at it!"

And so I did, though I had little hope of clearing it. I lifted him a little on the snaffle, gave him the spur just as he reached the brink, and with a long and swinging leap, so easy that its motion was in truth scarce perceptible, he swept across it; before I had the time to think, we were again going at our best pace almost among the hounds.

Over myself, I cast a quick glance back toward Harry, who by a short turn of the chase had been thrown a few yards behind me. He charged it gallantly; but on the very verge, cowed by the brightness of the rippling water, the gray made a half stop, but leaped immediately beneath the application of the galling spur; he made a noble effort, but it was scarce a thing to be effected by

a standing leap, and it was with far less pleasure than surprise, that I saw him drop his hind legs down the steep bank, having just landed with fore-feet in the meadow.

I was afraid, indeed, he must have had an ugly fall, but, picked up quickly by the delicate and steady finger of his rider, the good horse found some slight projection of the bank, whereby to make a second spring. After a heavy flounder however, which must have dismounted any less perfect horseman, he recovered himself well, and before many minutes was again abreast of me!

Thus far, the course of the hunted fox had lain directly homeward, down the valley; but now the turnpike road making a sudden turn crossed his line at right angles, while another narrower road coming in at a tangent, went off to the south-westward in the direction of the bold projection which I had learned to recognise as Rocky Hill;—over the high fence into the road;—well performed, gallant horses! And now they check for a moment, puzzling about on the dry sandy turnpike.

“Dangerous feathers on it now. Speak to it! speak to it, good hound!”

How beautiful that flourish of the stern with which he darts away on the recovered scent! with what a yell they open it once again! Harry was right, he makes for Rocky Hill, but up this plaguey lane, where the scent lies but faintly. Now! now! the road turns off again far westward of his point! He may, by Jove! and he *has* left it!

“Have at him, then, lads; he is ours!”

And lo! the pace increases. Ha! what a sudden turn, and in the middle too of a clear pasture!

“Has he been headed, Harry?”

“No! no! his strength is failing!”

And see! he makes his point again toward the hill; it is within a quarter of a mile, and if he gain it we can do nothing with him, for it is full of earths. But he will never reach it! See! he turns once again! how exquisitely well those bitches run it; three times he has doubled, now almost as short as a hare, and they, running breast-high, have turned with him each time, not over-running it a yard.

See how the sheep have drawn together into phalanx yonder, in that bare pasture to the eastward; he has crossed that field for a thousand!

Yes! I am right. See! they turn once again. What a delicious rally! An outspread towel would cover those four leading hounds—now Dauntless has it; has it by half a neck.

“He always goes up, when a fox is sinking,” Harry exclaimed, pointing toward him with his hunting whip.

Aye; he has given up his point entirely; he knew he could not face the hill. Look! look at those carrion crows; how low they stoop over that woody bank. That is his line. Here is the road again! Over it once more merrily! and now we view him.

“Whoop! Forra-ard, lads, forra-ard!”

He cannot hold five minutes; and see, there comes fat Tom, pounding that mare along the road, as if her fore-feet were of hammered iron; he has come up along the turnpike at an infernal pace, while that turn favoured him; but he will only see us kill him, and that, too, at a respectful distance.

Another brook stretches across our course, hurrying to join the greater stream along the banks of which we have so long been speeding: but this is a little one; there! we have cleared

it cleverly. Now! now! the hounds are viewing him. Poor brute! his day is come. See how he twists and doubles. Ah! now they have him! No! that short turn has saved him, and he gains the fence—he will lie down there! No! he stretches gallantly across the next field—game to the last, poor devil! There!

“Who-whoop! Dead! dead! who-whoop!”

And in another instant Harry had snatched him from the hounds, and holding him aloft displayed him to the rest, as they came up along the road.

“A pretty burst,” he said to me, “a pretty burst, Frank, and a good kill; but they can’t stand before the hounds, the foxes here, like our stout islanders; they are not forced to work so hard to gain their living. But now let us get homeward; I want my breakfast, I can tell you, and then a rattle at the quail. I mean to get full forty brace to-day, I promise you!”

“And we,” said I, “have marked down fifteen brace already toward it; right in the line of our beat, Tom says.”

“That’s right! well, let us go on.”

And in a short half-hour we were all once again assembled about Tom’s hospitable board,

and making such a breakfast, on every sort of eatable that can be crowded on a breakfast table, as sportsmen only have a right to make; nor they, unless they have walked ten, or galloped half as many miles, before it.

Before we had been in an hour, Harry once again roused us out. All had been, during our absence, fully prepared by the indefatigable Tim; who, as the day before, accoutred with spare shot and lots of provender, seemed to grudge us each morsel that we ate, so eager was he to see us take the field in season.

Off we went then;—but what boots it to repeat a thrice told tale? suffice it, that the dogs worked as well as dogs can work; that birds were plentiful, and lying good; that we fagged hard, and shot on the whole passably, so that by sunset we had exceeded Harry's forty brace by fifteen birds, and got beside nine couple and a half of woodcock; which we found, most unexpectedly, basking themselves in the open meadow, along the grassy banks of a small rill, without a bush or tree within five hundred yards of them.

Evening had closed before we reached the well known tavern-stand, and the merry blaze of

the fire, and many candles, showed us, while yet far distant, that due preparations were in course for our entertainment.

“What have we here?” cried Harry, as we reached the door—“Race horses? Why, Tom, by heaven! we’ve got the Flying Dutchman here again; now for a night of it!”

And so in truth it was, a most wet, and most jovial one, seasoned with no small wit—but of that more anon!

DAY THE FOURTH.

WHEN we had entered Tom's hospitable dwelling, and delivered over our guns to be duly cleaned, and the dogs to be suppered, by Tim Matlock, I passed through the parlour, on my way to my own crib, where I found Archer in close confabulation with a tall raw-boned Dutchman, with a keen freckled face, small 'cute gray eyes, looking suspiciously about from under the shade of a pair of straggling sandy eyebrows, small reddish whiskers, and a head of carroty hair as rough and tangled as a fox's back.

His aspect was a wondrous mixture of sneak-iness and smartness, and his expression did most villanously belie him, if he were not as sharp a customer as ever wagged an elbow, or betted on a horse-race.

"Frank," exclaimed Harry, as I entered, "I make you know Mr. McTaggart, better known hereabouts as the Flying Dutchman, though how

he came by a Scotch name I can't pretend to say ; he keeps the best quarter horses, and plays the best hand of whist in the country : and now, get yourself clean as quick as possible, for Tom never gives one five minutes wherein to dress himself—so bustle.”

And off he went as he had finished speaking, and I, shaking my new friend cordially by an exceeding bony unwashed paw, incontinently followed his example—and in good time I did so ; for I had scarcely changed my shooting boots and wet worsteds for slippers and silk socks, before my door, as usual, was lounged open by Tom's massy foot, and I was thus exhorted :

“ Come, come, your supper's gittin' cold ; I never see such men as you and Archer is ; you're wash, wash, wash—all day ! It's little water enough that you use any other ways.”

“ Why, is there any other use for water, Tom ? ” I asked, simply enough.

“ It's lucky if there aint, any how—leastwise, where you and Archer is—else you'd leave none for the rest of us. It's a good thing you han't thought of washing your darned stinking hides in rum—you *will* be at it some of these odd days, I

warrant me. Why now, McTaggart, it's only yesterday I caught Archer up stairs, a fiddling away up there at his teeth with a little ivory brush; brushing them with cold water—cleaning them as he calls it! Cuss all such trash, says I."

While I was listening in mute astonishment, wondering whether *in truth* the old savage never cleaned his teeth, Archer made his appearance, and to a better supper never did I sit down, than was spread at the old round table, in such profusion as might have well sufficed to feed a troop of horse.

"What have we got here, Tom?" cried Harry, as he took the head of the *social board*; "quail-pie, by George!—are there any peppers in it, Tom?"

"Sartain there is," replied that worthy, "and a prime rump-steak in the bottom, and some first-best salt pork, chopped fine, and three small onions; like little Wax-skin used to fix them, when he was up here all last fall."

"Take some of this pie, Frank," said Archer, as he handed me a huge plate of leafy reeking pie-crust, with a slice of fat steak, and a plump hen quail, and gravy, and etceteras, that might

have made an alderman's mouth water; "and if you don't say it's the very best thing you ever tasted, you are not half so good a judge as I used to hold you. It took little Johnny and myself three wet days to concoct it. Pie, Tom, or roast pig?" he continued; "or broiled woodcock? Here they are, all of them."

"Why, I reckon I'll take cock; briled meat wants to be ate right stret away as soon as it comes off the griddle; and of all darned nice ways of cooking, to brile a thing, quick now, over hot hickory ashes, is the best for me!"

"I believe you're right about eating the cock first, for they will not be worth a farthing if they get cold. So you stick to the pig, do you—hey, McTaggart? Well, there is no reckoning on taste—holloa, Tim, look sharp! the champagne all 'round—I'm choking!"

And for some time no sound was heard, but the continuous clatter of knives and forks, the occasional popping of a cork, succeeded by the gurgling of the generous wine as it flowed into the tall rummers.

At last, however—for supper, alas! like all other earthly pleasures, must come to an end—

“The fairest still the fleetest”—our appetites waned gradually; and notwithstanding Harry’s earnest exhortations, and the production of a broiled ham-bone, devilled to the very utmost pitch of English mustard, soy, oil of Aix, and cayenne pepper, by no hands, as may be guessed, but those of that universal genius, Timothy; one by one, we gave over our labours edacious, to betake us to potations of no small depth or frequency.

“It is directly contrary to my rule, Frank, to drink before a good day’s shooting—and a good day I mean to have to-morrow!—but I am thirsty, and the least thought chilly; so here goes for a debauch! Tim, look in my box with the clothes, and you will find two flasks of curaçao; bring them down, and a dozen lemons, and some lump sugar—look alive! and you, Tom, out with your best brandy; I’ll make a jorum that will open your eyes *tight* before you’ve done with it. That’s right, Tim; now get the soup tureen, the biggest one, and see that it’s clean. The old villain has got a punch bowl—bring half-a-dozen of champagne, a bucket full of ice, and then go down into the kitchen, and make

two quarts of green tea, as strong as possible; and when it's made, set it to cool in the ice-house!"

In a few minutes all the ingredients were at hand; the rind, peeled carefully from all the lemons, was deposited with two tumblers full of finely powdered sugar in the bottom of the tureen; thereupon were poured instantly three pints of pale old Cognac; and these were left to steep, without admixture, until Tim Matlock made his entrance with the cold, strong, green tea; two quarts of this, strained clear, were added to the brandy, and then two flasks of curaçao!

Into this mixture a dozen lumps of clear ice were thrown, and the whole stirred up till the sugar was entirely suspended; then pop! pop! went the long necks, and their creaming nectar was discharged into the bowl; and, by the body of Bacchus—as the Italians swear—and by his soul too, which he never steeped in such delicious nectar, what a drink that was, when it was completed!

Even Tom Draw, who ever was much disposed to look upon strange potables as trash, and who

had eyed the whole proceedings with ill-concealed suspicion and disdain, when he had quaffed off a pint-beaker full, which he did without once moving the vessel from his head, smacked his lips with a report which might have been heard half-a-mile off, and which resembled very nearly the crack of a first-rate huntsman's whip.

"That's not slow, now!" he said, half dubiously; "to tell God's truth now, that's first-rate; I reckon, though, it would be better if there wasn't that tea into it—it makes it weak and trashy like!"

"You be hanged!" answered Harry; "that's mere affectation—that smack of your lips told the story; did you ever hear such an infernal sound? I never did, by George!"

"Begging your pardon, Measter Archer," interposed Timothy, pulling his forelock, with an expression of profound respect, mingled with a ludicrous air of regret at being forced to differ in the least degree from his master—"begging your pardon, Measter Archer, that was a roommer noise, and by a vary gre-at de-al too, when Measter McTavish sneezed me clean oot o' t' wagon!"

“What’s that?—what the devil’s that?” cried I; “this McTavish must be a queer genius; one day I hear of his frightening a bull out of a meadow, and the next of his sneezing a man out of a phaeton.”

“It’s simply true!—*both* are simply true! We were driving very slowly on an immensely hot day in the middle of August, between Lebanon Springs and Claverack; McTavish and I on the front seat, and Tim behind. Well! we were creeping at a foot’s pace, up a long, steep hill, just at the very hottest time of day; not a word had been spoken for above an hour, for we were all tired and languid—except once, when McTavish asked for his third tumbler, since breakfast, of Starke’s Ferintosh, of which we had three two-quart bottles in the liquor-case—when suddenly, without any sign or warning, McTavish gave a sneeze which, on my honour, was scarcely inferior in loudness to a pistol-shot! The horses started almost off the road, I jumped about half a foot off my seat, and positively, without exaggeration, Timothy tumbled slap out of the wagon into the road, and lay there sprawling in the dust, while Mac sat perfectly unmoved, without a smile upon

his face, looking straight before him, exactly as if nothing had happened."

"Nonsense, Harry," exclaimed I; "that positively won't go down."

"That's an eternal lie, now, Archer!" Tom chimed in; leastwise I don't know why I should say so neither, for I never saw no deviltry goin on yet, that didn't come as nat'ral to McTavish as lying to a minister, or——"

"Rum to Tom Draw!" responded Harry. "But it's true as the Gospel,—ask Timothy there!"

"Nay it's all true; only it's scarce so bad i' t' story, as it was i' right airnest! Aye, cooped oot o' t' drag, loike ivry thing; my hinder een was sair a moonth and better!"

"Now then," said I, "it's Tom's turn; let us hear about the bull."

"Oh, the bull!" answered Tom. "Well, you see, Archer there, and little Waxskin—you know little Waxskin, I guess, Mr. Forester?—and old McTavish, had gone down to shoot to Hell-hole—where we was yesterday, you see! Well now! it was hot, hot, worst kind, I tell you, and I was sort o' tired out, so Waxskin, in he goes into the thick, and Archer arter him, and up the old crick

side; thinkin, you see, that we was goin up where you and I walked yesterday; but not a bit of it; we never thought of no such thing, not we! We sot ourselves down underneath the haystacks, and made ourselves two good stiff horns of toddy, and cooled off there, all in the shade, as slick as silk.

“ Well, arter we’d been there quite a piece, bang! we hears, in the very thick of the swamp; bang! bang! and then I heerd Harry Archer roar out, ‘Mark! mark! Tom, mark! you old fat rascal;’ and sure enough, right where I should have been, if I’d been a doin right, out came two woodcock—big ones—they looked like hens, and I kind o’ thought it was a shame, so I got up to go to them, and called McTavish to go with me; but torights, jest as he was a gittin up, a heap of critters comes all chasin up, scart by a dog, I reckon, kickin their darned heels up, and bellowin like mad; and there was one young bull amongst them, quite a lump of a bull now I tell you; and the bull he came up pretty nigh to us, and stood and stawmped, and sort o’ snorted, as if he didn’t know right what he would be arter; and McTavish he gits up, and turns right round with his back to the critter;

he 'd got a bit of a round jacket on, and he stoops down till his head came right atween his legs, kind o' stradlin like, so that the bull could see nothing of him but his t'other eend, and his head right under it, chin uppermost, with his big black whiskers, lookin as fierce as the devil, and fiercer; well! the bull he stawmped agin, and pawed, and bellowed, and I was in hopes, I swon, that he would have hooked him; but jest then McTavish starts to run, goin along as I have told you, hind eend foremost—*bo-oo* went the bull, *a-boo-oo*, and off he starts like a strick, with his tail stret-on-eend, and his eyes starin, and all the critters arter him, and then they kind o' circled round, and all stood still and stared, and stawmped, till he got nigh to them, and then they all stricks off agin; and so they went on, runnin and then standin still; and so they went on the hull of an hour, I'll be bound; and I lay there upon my back laughin till I was stiff and sore all over; and then came Waxskin and old Archer, wrathy as the devil, and swearin—Lord, how they did swear!

“They 'd been a slavin there through the darned thorns and briers, and the old stinkin mud holes, and flushed a most almighty sight of cock, where

the brush was too thick to shoot them, and every one they flushed, he came stret out into the open field, where Archer knew we should have been, and where we should have killed a thunderin mess and no mistake ; and they went on dammin, and wonderin, and sweatin through the brush, till they got out to the far eend, and there they had to make tracks back to us through the bog meadow, under a brilin sun, and when they did get back, the bull was jest a goin through the bars, and every d—d drop o' the rum was dranked up ; and the sun was settin, and the day's shootin—that was spoiled!—and then McTavish tantalized them the worst sort. But I did laugh to kill ; it was the best I ever *did* see, was that spree. Ha, ha, ha !”

And, as he finished, he burst out into his first horse laugh, in which I chorused him most heartily, having in truth been in convulsions, between the queerness of his lingo, and the absurdly grotesque attitudes into which he threw himself, in imitating the persons concerning whom his story ran. After this, jest succeeded jest ; and story, story ; till, in good gruth, the glass circling the while with most portentous speed, I began to feel bees in my head, and till in truth no one, I believe, of the party,

was entirely collected in his thoughts, except Tom Draw, whom it is as impossible for liquor to affect, as it would be for brandy to make a hogshead drunk, and who stalked off to bed with an air of solemn gravity that would have well become a Spanish grandee of the olden time, telling us, as he left the room, that we were all as drunk as the devil, and that we should be stinkin in our beds till noon to-morrow.

A prediction, by the way, which he took right good care to defeat in his own person; for, in less than five hours after we retired, which was about the first of the small hours, he rushed into my room, and finding that the awful noises which he made had no effect in waking me, dragged me bodily out of bed, and clapping my wet sponge in my face, walked off, as he said, to fetch the bit-
ters, which were to make me as fine as silk upon the instant.

This time I must confess that I did not look with quite so much disgust on the old apple-jack; and in fact, after a moderate horn, I completed my ablutions, and found myself perfectly fresh and ready for the field. Breakfast was soon despatched, and on this occasion as soon as we had

got through the broiled ham and eggs, the wagon made its appearance at the door.

"What's this, Harry?" I exclaimed; "where are we bound for now?"

"Why, Master Frank," he answered, "to tell you the plain truth, while you were sleeping off the effects of the last night's regent's punch, I was on foot inquiring into the state of matters and things; and since we have pretty well exhausted our home beats, and I have heard that some ground, about ten miles distant, is in prime order, I have determined to take a try there; but we must look pretty lively, for it is seven now, and we have got a drive of ten stiff miles before us. Now, old Grampus, are you ready?"

"Aye! aye!" responded Tom, and mounted up, a work of no small toil for him, into the back seat of the wagon, where I soon took my seat beside him, with the two well-broke setters crouching at our feet, and the three guns strapped neatly to the side-rails of the wagon. Harry next mounted the box. Tim touched his hat, and jumped up to his side, and off we rattled at a merry trot, wheeling around the rival tavern which stood in close propinquity to Tom's; then turning short again to

the left-hand, along a broken stony road, with several high and long hills, and very awkward bridges in the valleys, to the north-westward of the village.

Five miles brought us into a pretty little village, lying at the base of another ridge of what might almost be denominated mountains, save that they were cultivated to the very top. As we paused on the brow of this, another glorious valley spread out to our view, with the broad sluggish waters of the Wallkill winding away, with hardly any visible motion, toward the north-east, through a vast tract of meadow-land, covered with high rank grass, dotted with clumps of willows and alder brakes, and interspersed with large deep swamps, thick-set with high grown timber; while far beyond these, to the west, lay the tall variegated chain of the Shawangunk mountains.

Rattling briskly down the hill, we passed another thriving village, built on the mountain side; made two or three sharp ugly turns, still going at a smashing pace, and, coming on the level ground, entered an extensive cedar swamp, impenetrable above with the dark boughs of the evergreen colossi, and below with half-a-dozen varieties of

rhododendron, calmia, and azalea. Through this dark dreary track the road ran straight as the bird flies, supported on the trunks of trees, constituting what is here called a corduroy road; an article which, praise be to all the gods, is disappearing now so rapidly, that this is the only bit to be found in the civilized regions of New York—and bordered to the right and left by ditches of black tenacious mire. Beyond this we scaled another sandy hillock, and pulled up at a little wayside tavern, at the door of which Harry set himself lustily to holloa.

“Why, John—hilloa, hillo—John Riker!”

Whereon, out came, stooping low to pass under the lintel of a very fair sized door, one of the tallest men I ever looked upon; his height, too, was exaggerated by the narrowness of his chest and shoulders, which would have been rather small for a man of five foot seven; but to make up for this, his legs were monstrous, his arms muscular, and his whole frame evidently powerful and athletic, though his gait was slouching, and his air singularly awkward and unhandy.

“Why, how do, Mr. Archer? I hadn’t heerd you was in these pairts—arter woodcock, I reckon?”

"Yes, John, as usual; and you must go along with us, and show us the best ground."

"Well, you see, I can't go to-day—for Squire Breawn, and Dan Faushea, and a whole grist of Goshen boys is comin over to the island here to fish; but you can't well go wrong."

"Why not?—are birds plenty?"

"Well! I guess they be! plentier than ever yet I see them here."

"By Jove! that's good news," Harry answered; "where shall we find the first?"

"Why, amost anywheres—but here, jist down by the first bridge, there's a hull heap—leastwise there was a Friday—and then you'd best go on to the second bridge, and keep the edge of the hill right up and down to Merrit's Island; and then beat down here home to the first bridge again. But won't you liquor?"

"No, not this morning, John; we did our liquoring last night. Tom, do you hear what John says?"

"I hear, I hear," growled out old Tom; "but the critter lies like the devil. He always does lie, d—n him!"

"Well, here goes, and we'll soon see!"

And away we went again, spinning down a little descent, to a flat space between the hill-foot and the river, having a thick tangled swamp on the right, and a small boggy meadow full of grass, breast-high, with a thin open alder grove beyond it on the left. Just as we reached the bridge Harry pulled up.

“Jump out, boys, jump out! Here’s the spot.”

“I tell you there aint none; d—n you! There aint none never here, nor haint been these six years; you know that now, yourself, Archer.”

“We’ll try it, all the same,” said Harry, who was coolly loading his gun. “The season has been wetter than common, and this ground is generally too dry. Drive on, Tim, over the bridge, into the hollow; you’ll be out of shot there; and wait till we come. Holloa! mark, Tom.”

For, as the wagon wheels rattled upon the bridge, up jumped a cock out of the ditch by the road side, from under a willow brush, and skimmed past all of us within five yards. Tom Draw and I, who had got out after Harry, were but in the act of ramming down our first barrels; but Harry, who had loaded one, and was at that

moment putting down the wad upon the second, dropped his ramrod with the most perfect *sang froid* I ever witnessed, took a cap out of his right-hand pocket, applied it to the cone, and pitching up his gun, knocked down the bird as it wheeled to cross the road behind us, by the cleverest shot possible.

“That’s pretty well for no birds, anyhow, Tom,” he exclaimed, dropping his butt to load. “Go and gather that bird, Frank, to save time; he lies in the wagon rut, there. How now? down charge, you Chase, sir! what are you about?”

The bird was quickly bagged, and Harry loaded. We stepped across a dry ditch, and both dogs made game at the same instant.

“Follow the red dog, Frank!” cried Archer, “and go very slow; there are birds here!”

And as he spoke, while the dogs were crawling along, cat-like, pointing at every step, and then again creeping onward, up skirred two birds under the very nose of the white setter, and crossed quite to the left of Harry. I saw him raise his gun, but that was all; for at the self-same moment one rose to me, and my ear caught the flap of yet another to my right; five barrels

were discharged so quickly that they made but three reports; I cut my bird well down, and looking quickly to the left, saw nothing but a stream of feathers drifting along the wind. At the same time old Tom shouted on the right—

“I have killed two, by George! What have you done, boys?”

“Two, I!” said Archer. “Wait, Frank, don’t you begin to load till one of us is ready; there’ll be another cock up, like enough. Keep your barrel; I’ll be ready in a jiffy!”

And well it was that I obeyed him, for at the squeak of the card, in its descent down his barrel, another bird did rise, and was making off for the open alders, when my whole charge riddled him; and instantly at the report three more flapped up, and of course went off unharmed; but we marked them, one by one, down in the grass at the wood edge. Harry loaded again. We set off to pick up our dead birds. Shot drew, as I thought, on my first, and pointed dead within a yard of where he fell. I walked up carelessly, with my gun under my arm, and was actually stooping to bag him, as I thought, when whiz! one rose almost in my face; and, bothered by seeing us all around

him, towered straight up into the air. Taken completely by surprise, I blazed away in a hurry, and missed clean ; but not five yards did he go, before Tom cut him down.

“ Aha, boy ! whose eye ’s wiped now ? ”

“ Mine, Tom, very fairly ; but can that be the same cock I knocked down, Archer ? ”

“ Not a bit of it ; I saw yours fall dead as a stone ; he lies half a yard farther in that tussock. ”

“ How the deuce did you see him ? Why you were shooting your own at the same moment. ”

“ All knack, Frank ; I marked both my own and yours, and one of Tom’s beside. Are you ready ? Hold up, Shot ! There ! he has got your dead bird ! Was not I right ? And look to ! for, by Jove ! he is standing on another, with the dead bird in his mouth ! That’s pretty, is it not ? ”

Again two rose, and both were killed ; one by Tom, and one by Archer—my gun hanging fire.

“ That’s nine birds down before we have bagged one,” said Archer ; “ I hope no more will rise, or we ’ll be losing these. ”

But this time his hopes were not destined to meet accomplishment, for seven more woodcock got up, five of which were scattered in the grass

around us, wing-broken or dead, before we had even bagged the bird which Shot was gently mouthing.

"I never saw any thing like this in my life, Tom! Did you?" cried Harry.

"I never did, by George!" responded Tom. "Now do you think there's any three men to be found in York, such darned eternal fools as to be willing to shoot a match agin us?"

"To be sure I do, lots of them; and to beat us too, to boot, you stupid old porpoise. Why, there's Harry T——, and Nick L——, and a dozen more of them, that you and I would have no more chance with, than a gallon of brandy would have of escaping from you at a single sitting. But we have shot pretty well to-day. Now do, for heaven's sake, let us try to bag them!"

And scattered though they were in all directions, among the most infernal tangled grass I ever stood on, those excellent dogs retrieved them one by one, till every bird was pocketed. We then beat on and swept the rest of the meadow, and the outer verge of the alders, picking up three more birds, making a total of seventeen brought to bag in less than half-an-hour. We then proceeded to

the wagon, took a good pull of water from a beautiful clear spring by the road-side, properly qualified with whiskey, and rattled on about one mile farther to the second bridge. Here we again got out.

"Now, Tim," said Harry, "mark me well! Drive gently to the old barrack yonder under the west end of that woodside, unhitch the horses and tie them in the shade; you can give them a bite of meadow hay at the same time; and then get luncheon ready. We shall be with you by two o'clock at farthest."

"Aye, aye, sur!"

And off he drove at a steady pace, while we, striking into the meadow, to the left-hand of the road, went along getting sport such as I never beheld, or even dreamed of before. For about five hundred yards in width from the stream, the ground was soft and miry to the depth of some four inches, with long sword grass quite knee-deep, and at every fifty yards a bunch of willows or swamp alders. In every clump of bushes we found from three to five birds, and as the shooting was for the most part very open, we rendered on the whole a good account of them. The dogs

throughout behaved superbly, and Tom was altogether frantic with the excitement of the sport. The time seemed short indeed, and I could not for a moment have imagined that it was even noon, when we reached the barrack.

This was a hut of rude unplanned boards, which had been put up formerly with the intent of furnishing a permanent abode for some labouring men, but which, having been long deserted, was now used only as a temporary shelter by charcoal-burners, hay-makers, or, like ourselves, stray sportsmen. It was, however, though rudely built, and fallen considerably into decay, perfectly beautiful from its romantic site; for it stood just at the end of a long tangled covert, with a huge pin-oak tree, leaning abruptly out from an almost precipitous bank of yellow sand, completely canopying it; while from a crevice in the sand-stone there welled out a little source of crystal water, which expanded into as sweet a basin as ever served a Dryad for her bath in Arcady, of old.

Before it stretched the wide sweep of meadow land, with the broad blue Wallkill gliding through it, fringed by a skirt of coppice, and the high mountains, veiled with a soft autumnal mist,

sleeping beyond, robed in their many-coloured garb of crimson, gold, and green. Beside the spring the indefatigable Tim had kindled a bright glancing fire, while in the basin were cooling two long-necked bottles of the Baron's best; a clean white cloth was spread in the shade before the barrack door, with plates and cups, and bread cut duly, and a travelling case of cruets, with all the other appurtenances needful.

On our appearance he commenced rooting in a heap of embers, and soon produced six nondescript looking articles enclosed—as they dress maintenon cutlets or red mullet—in double sheets of greasy letter paper—these he incontinently dished, and to my huge astonishment they turned out to be three couple of our woodcock, which that indefatigable varlet had picked, and baked under the ashes, according to some strange idea, whether original, or borrowed at second hand from his master, I never was enabled to ascertain.

The man, be he whom he may, who invented that *plat*, is second neither to Caramel nor to Ude—the exquisite juicy tenderness of the meat, the preservation of the gravy, the richness of the trail—by heaven! they were inimitable.

In that sweet spot we loitered a full hour—then counted our bag, which amounted already to fifty-nine cock, not including those with which Tim's gastronomic art had spread for us a table in the wilderness—then leaving him to pack up and meet us at the spot where we first started, we struck down the stream homeward, shooting our way along a strip of coppice about ten yards in breadth, bounded on one side by the dry bare bank of the river, and on the other by the open meadows. We of course kept the verges of this covert, our dogs working down the middle, and so well did we manage it, that when we reached the wagon, just as the sun was setting, we numbered a hundred and twenty-five birds bagged, besides two which were so cut by the shot as to be useless, six which we had devoured, and four or five which we lost in spite of the excellence of our retrievers. When we got home again, although the Dutchman was on the spot, promising us a quarter race upon the morrow, and pressing earnestly for a rubber to-night, we were too much used up to think of anything but a good supper and an early bed.

DAY THE FIFTH.

OUR last day's shooting in the vale of Sugar-loaf was over ; and, something contrary to Harry's first intention, we had decided, instead of striking westward into Sullivan or Ulster, to drive five miles upon our homeward route, and beat the Long-pond mountain—not now for such small game as woodcock, quail, or partridge ; but for a herd of deer, which, although now but rarely found along the western hills, was said to have been seen already several times, to the number of six or seven head, in a small cove, or hollow basin, close to the summit of the Bellevale ridge.

As it was not of course our plan to return again to Tom Draw's, every thing was now carefully and neatly packed away ; the game, of which we had indeed a goodly stock, was produced from Tom's ice-house, where, suspended from the rafters, it had been kept as sound and fresh as though it had been all killed only on the preceding day.

A long deep box, fitting beneath the gun-case under the front seat, was now produced, and proved to be another of Harry's notable inventions; for it was lined throughout, lid, bottom, sides and all, with zinc, and in the centre had a well or small compartment of the same material, with a raised grating in the bottom. This well was forthwith lined with a square yard, or rather more, of flannel, into which was heaped a quantity of ice pounded as fine as possible, sufficient to cram it absolutely to the top; the rest of the box was then filled with the birds, displayed in regular rows, with heads and tails alternating, and a thin coat of clean dry wheaten straw between each layer, until but a few inches' depth remained between the noble pile and the lid of this extempore refrigerator; this space being filled in with flannel packed close and folded tightly, the box was locked and thrust into the accurately fitting boot by dint of the exertion of Timothy's whole strength.

"There, Frank," cried Harry, who had superintended the storage of the whole with nice scrutiny, "those chaps will keep there as sound as roaches, till we get to young Tom's at Ramapo;

you cannot think what work I had, trying in vain to save them, before I hit upon this method; I tried hops, which I have known in England to keep birds in an extraordinary manner—for, what you 'll scarce believe, I once ate a ptarmigan, the day year after it was killed, which had been packed with hops, in perfect preservation, at Farnley, Mr. Fawke's place in Yorkshire!—and I tried prepared charcoal, and got my woodcock down to New York, looking like chimney-sweeps, and smelling——”

“What the devil difference does it make to you now, Archer, I'd be pleased to know,” interposed Tom, “what under heaven they smells like? a man that eats cock with their guts in, like you does, needn't stick now, I reckon, for a leetle mite of a stink!”

“Shut up, you old villain!” answered Harry, laughing; “bring the milk-punch, and get your great-coat on, if you mean to go with us, for it's quite keen this morning, I can tell you; and we must be stirring, too, for the sun will be up before we get to Teachman's. Now, Jem, get out the hounds. How do you take them, Tom?”

“Why, that d—d Injun, Jem, he'll take them

in my lumber wagon; and, I say, Jem, see that you don't over-drive old Roan. Away with you, and rouse up Garry; he means to go, I guess."

After a mighty round of punch, in which, as we were now departing, one half at least of the village joined, we all got under weigh; Tom, buttoned up to the throat in a huge white lion-skin wrap-rascal, looking for all the world like a polar bear erect on its hind-legs, and all of us muffled up pretty snugly, a proceeding which was rendered necessary by a brisk bracing north-west breeze.

The sky, though it was scarcely the first twilight of an autumnal dawn, was beautifully clear, and as transparent, though still somewhat dusky, as a wide sheet of crystal; a few pale stars were twinkling here and there, but in the east a broad gray streak, changing on the horizon's edge to a faint straw colour, announced the sun's approach.

The whole face of the country, hill, vale, and woodland, was overspread by an universal coat of silvery hoar-frost; thin wreaths of snowy mist rising above the tops of the sere woodlands, throughout the whole length of the lovely vale,

indicated, as clearly as though it were traced on a map, the direction of the stream that watered it; and as we paused upon the brow of the first hillock, and looked back toward the village, with its white steeples and neat cottage dwellings buried in the still repose of that early hour, with only one or two faint columns of blue smoke worming their way up lazily into the cloudless atmosphere, a feeling of regret, such as has often crossed my mind before, when leaving any place wherein I have spent a few days happily, and which I never may see more, rendered me somewhat indisposed to talk.

Something or other—it might with Harry, perhaps, have been a similar train of thought—caused both my comrades to be more taciturn by far than was their wont; and we had rattled over five miles of our route, and scaled the first ridge of the hills, and dived into the wide ravine. Midway the depth of this, the pretty village of Bellevale lies, on the brink of the dammed rivulet, which, a few yards below the neat stone bridge, takes a precipitous leap of fifty feet, over a rustic wier, and rushes onward, bounding from ledge to ledge of rifted rocks, chafing and fretting as if it

were doing a match against time, and were in danger of losing its race.

Thus we had passed the heavy lumber wagon, with Jem and Garry perched on a board laid across it, and the four couple of stanch hounds nestling in the straw which Tom had provided in abundance for their comfort, before the silence was broken by any sounds except the rattle of the wheels, the occasional interjectional whistle of Harry to his horses, or the flip of the well-handled whip.

Just, however, as we were shooting ahead of the lumber wain, an exclamation from Tom Draw, which should have been a sentence, had it not been very abruptly terminated in a long rattling oath, arrested Archer's progress.

Pulling short up where a jog across the road, constructed after the damnable mode adopted in all the hilly portions of the interior, in order to prevent the heavy rains from channelling the descent, afforded him a chance of stopping on the hill so as to slack his traces. "How now?" he exclaimed; "what the deuce ails you now, you old rhinoceros?"

"Oh, Archer, I feels bad; worst sort, by Judas!

It's that milk-punch, I reckon ; it keeps a-raising, raising, all the time, like——"

" And you want to lay it, I suppose, like a ghost, in a sea of whiskey ; well, I've no especial objection. Here, Tim, hand the case bottle, and the dram cup. No, no ! confound you ! pass it this way first, for if Tom once gets hold of it, we may say good-bye to it altogether. There," he continued, after we had both taken a moderate sip at the superb old Ferintosh, " there, now, take your chance at it, and for heaven's sake do leave a drop for Jem and Garry ! By George, now, you *shall not* drink it *all* !" as Tom poured down the third cup-full, each being as big as an ordinary beer-glass. " There was above a pint and a half in it when you began, and now there's barely one cup-full between the two of them. Aint you ashamed of yourself now, you greedy old devil ?"

" It doos go right, I swon !" was the only reply that could be got out of him.

" That's more a plaguy sight than the bullets will do out of your old Tower-musket ; you're so drunk now, I fancy, that you couldn't hold it straight enough to hit a deer at three rods, let alone thirty, which you are so fond of chattering about."

"Do tell now," replied Tom, "did you, or any other feller, ever see me shoot the worser for a mite of liquor; and as for deer, that's all a no sich thing; there arn't no deer a this side of Duck-seedar's. It's all a lie of Teachman's and that Deckering son of a gun."

"Holloa! hold up, Tom; recollect yesterday! I thought there had been no cock down by the first bridge there, these six years; why you're getting quite stupid, and a croaker too, in your old age."

"Mayhap I be," he answered rather gruffly; "mayhap I be, but you won't git no deer to-day. I'll stand drinks for the company; and if we doos start one, I'll lay on my own musket agin your rifle."

"Well we'll soon see, for here we are," Harry replied, as after leaving the high road just at the summit of the Bellevalle mountain, he rattled down a very broken rutty bye-road at the rate of at least eight miles an hour, vastly to the discomfiture of our fat host, whose fleshy sides were jolted almost out of their skin by the concussion of the wheels against the many stones and jogs which opposed their progress.

"Here we are, or at least soon will be. It is

but a short half-mile through these woods to Teachman's cottage. Is there a gun loaded, Tim? It's ten to one we shall have a partridge fluttering up and treeing here directly; I'll let the dogs out—get away, Flash! get away, Dan! you little rascals. Jump out, good dogs, Shot, Chase—hie up with you!" and out they went rattling and scrambling through the brushwood all four abreast!

At the same moment Tim, leaning over into the body of the wagon, lugged out a brace of guns from their leathern cases; Harry's short ounce ball rifle, and the long single-barrelled duck gun.

"'T roifle is loaden wi a single ball, and 't single goon wi yan of them green cartridges!"

"Much good ball and buck-shot will do us against partridge; nevertheless, if one trees, I'll try if I can't cut his head off for him," said Archer, laughing.

"Nay, nay! it be-ant book-shot, it's no but noomber three; tak' haud on't, Measter Draa, tak' haud on't. It's no hoort thee, mon, and 't horses boath stand foire cannily!"

Scarce had fat Tom obeyed his imperative soli-

citations, and scarce had Tim taken hold of the ribands which Harry relinquished the moment he got the rifle into his hands, before a most extraordinary hubbub arose in the little skirt of coppice to our left; the spaniels quested for a second's space at the utmost, when a tremendous crash of the branches arose, and both the setters gave tongue furiously with a quick savage yell.

The road at this point of the wood made a short and very sudden angle, so as to enclose a small point of extremely dense thicket between its two branches; on one of these was our wagon, and down the other the lumber wain was rumbling, at the moment when this strange and most unexpected outcry started us all.

"What in t' fient's neam is yon?" cried Timothy.

"And what the devil's that?" responded I and Archer in a breath.

But whatever it was that had aroused the dogs to such a most unusual pitch of fury, it went crashing through the brushwood for some five or six strokes at a fearful rate toward the other wagon; before, however, it had reached the road, a most appalling shout from Jem, followed upon

the instant by the blended voices of all the hounds opening at once, as on a view, excited us yet farther.

I was still tugging at my double gun, in the vain hope of getting it out time enough for action. Tom had scrambled out of the wagon on the first alarm, and stood eye, ear, and heart erect, by the off side of the horses, which were very restless, pawing, and plunging violently, and almost defying Timothy's best skill to hold them; while Harry, having cast off his box-coat, stood firm and upright on the foot-board as a carved statue, with his rifle cocked and ready; when, headed back upon us by the yell of Lyn and the loud clamour of his fresh foes, the first buck I had seen in America, and the largest I had seen any where, dashed at a single plunge into the road, clearing the green head of a fallen hemlock, apparently without an effort, his splendid antlers laid back on his neck, and his white flag lashing his fair round haunch as the fleet bitches Bonny Belle and Blossom yelled with their shrill fierce trebles close behind him.

Seeing that it was useless to persist in my endeavour to extricate my gun, and satisfied that

the matter was in good hands, I was content to look on, an inactive but most eager witness.

Tom, who from his position at the head of the off horse, commanded the first view of the splendid creature, pitched his gun to his shoulder hastily and fired; the smoke drifted across my face, but through its vapoury folds I could distinguish the dim figure of the noble hart still bounding unhurt onward; but, before the first echo of the round ringing report of Tom's shot-gun reached my ear, the sharp flat crack of Harry's rifle followed it, and at the self-same instant the buck sprang six feet into the air, and pitched head foremost on the ground; it was but for a moment, however, for with the speed of light he struggled to his feet, and though sore wounded, was yet toiling onward when the two English foxhounds dashed at his throat and pulled him down again.

"Run in, Tom, run in, quick!" shouted Harry; "he's not clean killed, and may gore the dogs sadly."

"I've got no knife," responded Tom—but dauntlessly he dashed in, all the same, to the rescue of the bitches—which I believe he loved almost as well as his own children—and though, encumbered

by his ponderous white top-coat, not to say by his two hundred and fifty weight of solid flesh, seized the fierce animal by the brow-antlers, and bore him to the ground, before Harry, who had leaped out of the wagon, with his first words, could reach him.

The next moment the keen short hunting knife, without which Archer never takes the field, had severed at a single stroke the weasand of the gallant brute; the black blood streamed out on the smoking hoar-frost, the full eyes glazed, and, after one sharp fluttering struggle, the life departed from those graceful limbs, which had been but a few short instants previously so full of glorious energy, of fiery vigour.

"Well, that's the strangest thing I ever heard of, let alone seeing!" exclaimed Archer: "fancy a buck like that lying in such a mere fringe of cop-pice, and so near to the road side, too! and why the deuce did he lay here till we almost passed him?"

"I know how it's been, any heaw," said Jem, who had by this time come up, and was looking on with much exultation flashing in his keen small eye. "Bill Speer up on the hill there telled me

jist now, that they druv a big deer down from the back bone clear down to this here hollow just above, last night arter dark. Bill shot at him, and kind o' reckoned he hot him—but I guess he's mistaken—leastwise he jumped strong enough jist neaw!—but which on you was 't 'at killed him?"

"I did," exclaimed Tom, "I did, by ——!"

"Why, you most impudent of all old villains!" replied Harry, while at the same time, with a most prodigious chuckle, Tim Matlock pointed to the white bark of a birch sapling, about the thickness of a man's thigh, standing at somewhat less than fifteen paces' distance, wherein the large shot contained by the wire cartridge—the best sporting invention, by the way, that has been made since percussion caps—had bedded themselves in a black circle, cut an inch at least into the solid wood, and about two inches in diameter.

"I ken gay, fairly," exclaimed Tim, "'at Ay rammed an Eley's patent cartridge into 't single goon this morning; and yonder is 't i' t' birk tree, an Ay ken a load o' shot frae an unce bullet!"

The laugh was general now against fat Tom; especially as the small wound made by the heavy ball

of Harry's rifle was plainly visible, about a hand's breadth behind the heart, on the side toward which he had aimed ; while the lead had passed directly through, in an oblique direction forward, breaking the left shoulder-blade, and lodging just beneath the skin, whence a touch of the knife dislodged it.

"What now—what now, boys?" cried the old sinner, no whit disconcerted by the general mirth against him. "I say, by gin! I killed him, and I say so yet. Which on ye all—which on ye all daared to go in on him, without a knife nor nothen? I killed him, I say, anyhow, and so let 's drink!"

"Well, I believe we must wet him," Harry answered ; "so get out another flask of whiskey, Tim ; and you, Jem and Garry, lend me a hand to lift this fine chap into the wagon. By Jove! but this will make the Teachmans open their eyes ; and now look sharp! You sent the Teachmans word that we were coming, Tom?"

"Sartin! and they've got breakfast ready long enough before this, anyways."

With no more of delay, but with lots more of merriment and shouting, on we drove ; and in five minutes' space, just as the sun was rising, reached

the small rude enclosure around two or three log huts, lying just on the verge of the beautiful clear lake. Two long sharp boats, and a canoe scooped out of a whole tree, were drawn up on the sandy beach; a fishing-net of many yards in length was drying on the rails; a brace of large, strong black and tan fox hounds were lying on the step before the door; a dozen mongrel geese, with one wing-tipped wild one among them, were sauntering and gabbling about the narrow yard; and a glorious white-headed fishing eagle, with a clipped wing, but otherwise at large, was perched upon the roof hard-by the chimney.

At the rattle of our arrival, out came from the larger of the cottages, three tall rough-looking countrymen to greet us, not one of whom stood less than six foot in his stockings, while two were several inches taller.

Great was their wonder, and loud were their congratulations, when they beheld the unexpected prize which we had gained, while on our route; but little space was given at that time to either; for the coffee, which, by the way, was poor enough, and the hot cakes and fried perch, which were capital, and the grilled salt pork, swimming in fat,

and the large mealy potatoes bursting through their brown skins, were ready smoking upon a rough wooden board, covered, however, by a clean white table-cloth, beside a sparkling fire of wood, which our drive through the brisk mountain air had rendered by no means unacceptable.

We breakfasted like hungry men and hunters, both rapidly and well; and before half-an-hour elapsed, Archer, with Jem and one of our bold hosts, started away, well provided with powder, ball, and whiskey, and accompanied by all the hounds, to make a circuit of the western hill, on the summit of which they expected to be joined by two or three more of the neighbours, whence they proposed to drive the whole sweep of the forest-clad descent down to the water's edge.

Tim was enjoined to see to the provisions, and to provide as good a dinner as his best gastronomic skill and the contents of our portable larder might afford, and I was put under the charge of Tom, who seemed, for about an hour, disposed to do nothing but to lie dozing, with a cigar in his mouth, stretched upon the broad of his back, on a bank facing the early sunshine just without the door; while our hosts were collecting bait, pre-

paring fishing tackle, and cleaning or repairing their huge clumsy muskets. At length, when the drivers had been gone already for considerably more than an hour, he got up and shook himself.

“ Now then, boys,” he exclaimed, “ we ’ll be a movin. You, Joe Teachman, what are you lazin there about, d—n you? You go with Mr. Forester and Garry in the big boat, and pull as fast as you can put your oars to water, till you git opposite the white-stone pint, and there lie still as fishes! You may fish, though, if you will, Forester,” he added, turning to me, “ and I do reckon the big yellow perch *will* bite the darndest, this cold morning, arter the sun gits fairly up; but soon as ever you hear the hounds holler, or one of them chaps shoot, then look you out right stret away for business. Cale, here, and I ’ll take the small boat, and keep in sight of you; and so we can kiver all this eend of the pond like, if the deer tries to cross hereaways. How long is ’t, Cale, since we had six on them all at once in the water? six—seven—eight—well, I swon, it’s ten years ago now! But come, we mustn’t stand here talkin, else we ’ll get a dammin when they

drives down a buck into the pond, and none of us in there to tackle with him!"

So without more ado, we got into our boats, disposed our guns, with the stocks toward us, in the bows, laid in our stock of tinder, pipes, and liquor, and rowed off merrily to our appointed stations.

Never, in the whole course of my life, has it been my fortune to look upon more lovely scenery than I beheld that morning. The long narrow winding lake, lying as pure as crystal beneath the liquid skies, reflecting, with the correctness of the most perfect mirror, the abrupt and broken hills, which sank down so precipitously into it—clad as they were in foliage of every gorgeous dye, with which the autumn of America loves to enhance the beauty of her forest pictures—that, could they find their way into its mountain-girdled basin, ships of large burden might lie afloat within a stone's throw of the shore—the slopes of the wood-covered knolls, here brown, or golden, and interspersed with the rich crimson of the faded maples; there, verdant with the evergreen leaves of the pine and cedar; and the far azure summits of the most distant peaks—all steeped in the serene and glowing sunshine of an October morning.

For hours we lay there, our little vessel floating as the occasional breath of a sudden breeze, curling the lake into sparkling wavelets, chose to direct our course, smoking our cigars, and chatting cozily, and now and then pulling up a great broad-backed yellow bass, whose flapping would for a time disturb the peaceful silence which reigned over wood, and dale, and water, quite unbroken save by the chance clamour of a passing crow; yet not a sound betokening the approach of our drivers had reached our ears.

Suddenly, when the sun had long passed his meridian height, and was declining rapidly toward the horizon, the full round shot of a musket rang from the mountain top, followed immediately by a sharp yell; and in an instant the whole basin of the lake was filled with the harmonious discord of the hounds.

I could distinguish on the moment the clear, sharp challenge of Harry's high-bred fox-hounds, the deep bass voices of the Southern dogs, and the untameable and cur-like yelping of the dogs which the Teachmans had taken with them.

Ten minutes passed full of anxiety, almost of fear.

We knew not as yet whither to turn our boat's

head, for every second the course of the hounds seemed to vary ; at one instant they would appear to be rushing directly down to us, and the next instant they would turn, as though they were going up the hill again. Meantime our beaters were not idle ; their stirring shouts, serving alike to animate the hounds and to force the deer to water, made rock and wood reply in cheery echoes ; but, to my wonder, I caught not for a long time one note of Harry's gladsome voice.

At length, as I strained my eyes against the broad hill-side, gilt by the rays of the declining sun, I caught a glimpse of his form running at a tremendous pace, bounding over stock and stone, and plunging through dense thickets, on a portion of the declivity where the tall trees had a few years before been destroyed by accidental fire.

At this moment the hounds were running, to judge from their tongues, parallel to the lake and to the line which he was running ; the next minute, with a redoubled clamour, they turned directly down to him. I lost sight of him. But half a minute afterward, the sharp crack of his

rifle again rang upon the air, followed by a triumphant "Whoop! who-whoop!" and then I knew another stag had fallen.

The beaters on the hill shouted again, louder and louder than before, and the hounds still raved on. By heaven! but there must be a herd of them a-foot! And now the pack divides. The English hounds are bringing their game down—here—by the Lord! just here—right in our very faces! The Southrons have borne away over the shoulder of the hill, still running hot and hard in Jolly Tom's direction.

"By heaven!" I cried; "look, Teachman! Garry, look!—there! See you not that noble buck? he leaped that sumach bush like a race-horse; and see—see! now he will take the water. Bad luck on it! he sees us, and heads back."

Again the fleet hounds rally in his rear, and chide till earth and air are vocal and harmonious. Hark! hark! how Archer's cheers ring on the wind. Now he turns once again—he nears the edge—how glorious! With what a beautiful bold bound he leaped from that high bluff into the flashing wave! with what a majesty he tossed his antlered head above the spray! with how magni-

ficent and brave a stroke he breasts the curling billows!

“Give way, my men, give way!”

How the frail bark creaks and groans as we ply the long oars in the rullocks! how the ash bends in our sturdy grasp! how the boat springs beneath their impulse!

“Together, boys! together! now—now we gain! Now, Garry, lay your oar aside—up with your musket—now you are near enough—give it to him, in heaven’s name! A good shot, too; the bullet ricocheted from the lake scarcely six inches from his nose. Give way again; it’s my shot now.”

And lifting my Joe Manton, each barrel loaded with a bullet carefully wadded with greased buckskin, I took a careful aim and fired.

“That’s it,” cried Garry; “well done, Forester—right through the head, by George!”

And, as he spoke, I fancied for a moment he was right. The noble buck plunged half his height out of the bright blue water, shaking his head as if in the death agony; but the next instant he stretched out again with vigour unimpaired, and I could see that my ball had only knocked a tine off his left antler.

My second barrel still remained, and, without lowering the gun, I drew my second trigger. Again a fierce plunge told that the ball had not erred widely; and this time, when he again sank into his wonted posture, the deep crimson dye that tinged the foam which curled about his graceful neck, as he still struggled, feebly fleet, before his unrelenting foes, gave token of a deadly wound.

Six more strokes of the bending oars—we shot alongside—a noose of rope was cast across his branching tines, the keen knife flashed across his throat, and all was over. We towed him to the shore, where Harry and his comrades were awaiting us with another victim to his unerring aim. We took both bucks, and all hands on board pulled stoutly homeward, and found Tom lamenting.

Two deer, a buck of the first head, and a doe, had taken water close beside him—he had missed his first shot, and, in toiling over-hard to recover lost ground, had broken his oar, and been compelled inactively to witness their escape.

Three fat bucks made the total of the day's sport, not one of which had fallen to Tom's boasted musket.

It needed all that Tim's best dinner, with lots of champagne and Ferintosh, could do, to restore the fat chap's equanimity ; but he at last consoled himself, as we threw ourselves on the lowly beds of the log hut, by swearing that by the eternal devil he 'd beat us both at partridges to-morrow.

DAY THE SIXTH.

THE sun rose broad and bright in a firmament of that most brilliant and transparent blue, which I have witnessed in no other country than America, so pure, so cloudless, so immeasurably distant as it seems from the beholder's eye! There was not a speck of cloud from east to west, from zenith to horizon; not a fleece of vapour on the mountain sides; not a breath of air to ruffle the calm basin of the Greenwood lake.

The rock-crowned, forest-mantled ridge, on the farther side of the narrow sheet, was visible almost as distinctly through the medium of the pure fresh atmosphere, as though it had been gazed at through a telescope—the hues of the innumerable maples, in their various stages of decay, purple, and crimson, and bright gorgeous scarlet, were contrasted with the rich chrome yellow of the birch and poplars, the sere red

leaves of the gigantic oaks, and with the ever verdant plumage of the junipers, clustered in massy patches on every rocky promontory, and the tall spires of the dark pines and hemlock.

Over this mass of many-coloured foliage, the pale thin yellow light of the new-risen sun was pouring down a flood of chaste illumination; while, exhaled from the waters by his first beams, a silvery gauze-like haze floated along the shores, not rising to the height of ten feet from the limpid surface, which lay unbroken by the smallest ripple, undisturbed by the slightest splash of fish or insect, as still and tranquil to the eye as though it had been one huge plate of beaten burnished silver; with the tall cones of the gorgeous hills in all their rich variety, in all their clear minuteness, reflected, summit downward, palpable as their reality, in that most perfect mirror.

Such was the scene on which I gazed, as on the last day of our sojourn in the Woodlands of fair Orange, I issued from the little cabin, under the roof of which I had slept so dreamlessly and deep, after the fierce excitement of our deer hunt, that, while I was yet slumbering, all save myself

had risen, donned their accoutrements, and sallied forth, I knew not whither ; leaving me certainly alone, although as certainly not so much to my glory.

From the other cottage, as I stood upon the threshold, I might hear the voices of the females, busy at their culinary labours, the speedily approaching term of which was obviously denoted by the rich savoury steams which tainted—not, I confess, unpleasantly—the fragrant morning air.

As I looked out upon this lovely morning, I did not—I acknowledge it—regret the absence of my excellent though boisterous companions ; for there was something which I cannot define in the deep stillness, in the sweet harmonious quiet of the whole scene before me, that disposed my spirit to meditation far more than to mirth ; the very smoke which rose from the low chimneys of the Teachmans' colony—not surging to and fro, obedient to the fickle winds ; but soaring straight, tall, unbroken, upward, like Corinthian columns, each with its curled capital—seemed to invite the soul of the spectator to mount with it toward the sunny heavens.

By and by I strayed downward to the beach,

a narrow strip of silvery sand and variegated pebbles, and stood there long, silently watching the unknown sports, the seemingly—to us at least—unmeaning movements, and strange groupings of the small fry, which darted to and fro in the clear shallows within two yards of my feet; or marking the brief circling ripples, wrought by the morning swallow's wing, and momentarily subsiding into the wonted rest of the calm lake.

How long I stood there musing, I know not, for I had fallen into a train of thought so deep that I was utterly unconscious of everything around me, when I was suddenly aroused from my reverie by the quick dash of oars, and by a volley of some seven barrels discharged in quick succession. As I looked up with an air, I presume, somewhat bewildered, I heard the loud and bellowing laugh of Tom, and saw the whole of our stout company gliding up in two boats, the skiff and the canoe, toward the landing-place, perhaps a hundred yards from the spot where I stood.

“Come here, darn you!” were the first words I heard, from the mouth of what speaker it need not be said — “come here, you lazy, snortin,

snoozin Decker; lend a hand here right stret away, will you! We've got more perch than all of us can carry—and Archer's got six wood-duck!"

Hurrying down in obedience to this uncere-monious mandate, I perceived that indeed their time had not been misemployed, for the whole bottom of the larger boat was heaped with fish—the small and delicate green perch, the cat-fish, hideous in its natural, but most delicious in its artificial shape, and, above all, the large and broad-backed yellow bass, from two to four pounds weight; while Archer, who had gone forth with Garry only in the canoe, had picked up half-a-dozen wood-duck, two or three of the large yellow-legs, a little bittern, known by a far less elegant appellative throughout the country, and thirteen English snipe.

"By Jove," cried I, "but this is something like! Where the deuce did you pick the snipe up, Harry? and above all, why the deuce did you let me lie wallowing in bed this lovely morning?"

"One question at a time," responded he, "good master Frank; one question at a time! For the snipe, I found them very unexpectedly, I tell you,

in a bit of marshy meadow just at the outlet of the pond. Garry was paddling me along at the top of his pace, after a wing-tipped wood-duck, when up jumped one of the long-billed rascals, and had the impudence to skim across the creek under my very nose—'skeap! skeap!' Well, I dropped him, you may be sure, with a charge, too, of duck shot; and he fell some ten yards over on the meadow; so, leaving Garry to pursue the drake, I landed, loaded my gun with No. 9, and went to work—the result as you see. But I cleared the meadow—devil a bird is left there, except one I cut to pieces and could not find for want of Chase;—two went away without a shot, over the hills and far away! As for letting you lie in bed, you must talk to Tom about it; I bid him call you, and the fat rascal never did so, and never said a word about you till we were ready for a start, and then no master Frank was to the fore."

"Well, Tom," cried I, "what have you got to say to this?"

"Now, cuss you, don't come foolin' about me," replied that worthy, aiming a blow at me, which, had it taken place, might well have felled Goliath;

but which, as I sprang aside, wasting its energies on the impassive air, had well nigh floored the striker. "Don't you come foolin' about me—you knows right well I called you, and you knows, too, you almost cried, and told me to clear out, and let you git an hour's sleep! for, by the Lord, you thought Archer and I was made of steel! You couldn't and you wouldn't—and now you wants to know the reason why you warn't along with us!"

"Neyer mind the old thief, Frank," said Archer, seeing that I was on the point of answering; "even his own aunt says he is the most notorious liar in all Orange county—and Heaven forbid we should gainsay that most respectable old lady!"

Into what violent asseveration our host would have plunged at this declaration, remains, like the tale of Cambuscan bold, veiled in deep mystery; for as he started from the log on which he had been reposing while in the act of unsplicing his bamboo fishing-pole, the elder of the Teachmans thrust his head out of the cabin nearest to us—"Come, boys, to breakfast!"—and at the first word of his welcome voice, Tom made, as he

would have himself defined it, stret tracks for the table. And a mighty different table it was from that to which we had sat down on the preceding morning. Timothy, unscared by the wonder of the mountain nymphs, who deemed a being of the masculine gender as an intruder scarce to be tolerated, on the mysteries of the culinary art—had exerted his whole skill, and brought forth all the contents of his canteen! We had a superb steak of the fattest venison, graced by cranberries stewed with cayenne pepper and sliced lemons. A pot of excellent black tea, almost as strong as the cognac which flanked it; a dish of beautiful fried perch, with cream as thick as porridge; our own loaf-sugar, and Teachman's new-laid eggs: hot wheaten cakes, and hissing rashers of right tender pork, furnished a breakfast forth that might have vied successfully with those which called forth, in the Hebrides, such raptures from the lexicographer.

Breakfast dispatched—for which, to say the truth, Harry gave us but little time—we mustered our array and started; Harry and Tom and I making one party with the spaniels; Garry, the Teachmans, and Timothy, with the setters, which

would hunt very willingly for him in Archer's absence, forming a second. It was scarce eight o'clock when we went out, each on a separate beat, having arranged our routes so as to meet at one o'clock in the great swamp, said to abound, beyond all other places, in the ruffed grouse or partridge, to the pursuit of which especially we had devoted our last day.

"Now, Frank," said Harry, "you have done right well throughout the week; and if you can stand this day's tramp, I will say for you that you are a sportsman, aye, every inch of one. We have got seven miles right hard walking over the roughest hills you ever saw—the hardest moors of Yorkshire are nothing to them—before we reach the swamp, and that you'll find a settler! Tom, here, will keep along the bottoms, working his way as best he can; while we make good the uplands. Are your flasks full?"

"Sartain, they are!" cried Tom—"and I've got a rousin big black bottle, too—but not a drop of the old cider sperrits do you git this day, boys; not if your thirsty throats were cracking for it!"

"Well, well! we won't bother you—you'll need it all, old porpoise, before you get to the far

end. Here, take a hard-boiled egg or two, Frank, and some salt, and I'll pocket a few biscuits—we must depend on ourselves to day!"

"Ay, ay, Sur!" chuckled Timothy, "there's naw Tim Matlock to mak looncheon ready for ye a' the day. See thee, measter Frank, Ay'se gotten 't measter's single barrel; and gin I dunna ootshoot measter Draa, whoy Ay'se deny my coountry."

"Most certainly you will deny it then, Tim," answered I, "for Mr. Draw shoots excellently well, and you—"

"And Ay'se shot mony a hare by 't braw moon, doon i' bonny Cawoods. Ay'se beat, Ay'se oophaud* it!" So saying, he shouldered the long single barrel, and paddled off with the most extraordinary expedition after the Teachmans, who had already started, leading the setters in a leash, till they were out of sight of Archer.

"They have the longest way to go," said Harry, "by a mile at the least; so we have time for a cheroot before we three get under weigh."

Cigars were instantly produced and lighted, and we lounged about the little court for the best

* Oophaud, Yorkshire; Anglice, *uphold*.

part of half an hour, till the report of a distant gunshot, ringing with almost innumerable reverberations along the woodland shores, announced to us that our companions had already got into their work.

"Here goes!" cried Harry, springing to his feet at once, and grasping his good gun; "here goes! They have got into the long hollow, Tom, and by the time we've crossed the ridge, and got upon our ground, they'll be abreast of us."

"Hold on! hold on!" Tom bellowed, "you are the darndest critter, when you do get goin—now hold on, do—I wants some rum, and Forester here looks a kind of white about the gills, his what-d'ye-call, *cheeroot*, has made him sick, I reckon!"

Of course, with such an exhortation in our ears as this, it was impossible to do otherwise than wet our whistles with one drop of the old Ferintosh; and then, Tom having once again recovered his good humour, away we went, and "clombe the high hill," though we "swam not the deep river," as merrily as ever sportsmen did, from the days of Arbalast and Longbow, down to these times of Westley Richards' caps and Eley's wire cartridges.

A tramp of fifteen minutes through some scrubby brushwood, brought us to the base of a steep stony ridge covered with tall and thrifty hickories and a few oaks and maples intermixed, rising so steeply from the shore that it was necessary not only to strain every nerve of the leg, but to swing our bodies up from tree to tree, by dint of hand. It was indeed a hard and heavy tug ; and I had pretty tough work, what between the exertion of the ascent, and the incessant fits of laughter into which I was thrown by the grotesquely agile movements of fat Tom ; who, grunting, panting, sputtering, and launching forth from time to time the strangest and most blasphemously horrid oaths, contrived to make way to the summit faster than either of us, crashing through the dense underwood of juniper and sumach, uprooting the oak saplings as he swung from this to that, and spurning down huge stones upon us, as we followed at a cautious distance. When we at last crowned the ridge, we found him, just as Harry had predicted, stretched in a half-recumbent attitude, leaning against a huge gray stone, with his fur cap and double-barrel lying upon the withered leaves beside him, puffing, as

Archer told him, to his mighty indignation, like a great grampus in shoal-water.

After a little rest, however, Falstaff revived, though not before he had imbibed about a pint of applejack, an occupation in which he could not persuade either of us, this time, to join him. Descending from our elevated perch, we now got into a deep glen, with a small brooklet winding along the bottom, bordered on either hand by a stripe of marshy bog earth, bearing a low growth of alder bushes, mixed with stunted willows. On the side opposite to that by which we had descended, the hill rose long and lofty, clothed with mighty timber-trees standing in open ranks and overshadowing a rugged and unequal surface, covered with whortleberry, winter-green, and cranberries, the latter growing only along the courses of the little runnels which channelled the whole slope. Here, stony ledges and gray broken crags peered through the underwood, among the crevices of which the stunted cedars stood thick set, and matted with a thousand creeping vines and brambles; while there, from some small marshy basin, the giant *Rhododendron Maximum* rose almost to the height of a timber-tree.

“Here, Tom,” said Harry, “keep you along this run—you’ll have a woodcock every here and there, and look sharp when you hear them fire over the ridge, for they can’t shoot to speak of, and the partridge will cross, you know. You, master Frank, stretch your long legs and get three parts of the way up this hill—over the second mound—there, do you see that great blue stone with a thunder splintered tree beside it? just beyond that! then turn due west, and mark the trending of the valley, keeping a little way ahead of me, which you will find quite easy, for I shall have to beat across you both. Go very slow, Tom—now, hurrah!”

Exhorted thus, I bounded up the hill and soon reached my appointed station; but not before I heard the cheery voice of Archer encouraging the eager spaniels—“Hie, cock! hie, cock! pu-r-r-h!”—till the woods rang to the clear shout!

Scarce had I reached the top, before, as I looked down into the glen below me, a puff of white smoke, instantly succeeded by a second, and the loud full reports of both his barrels from among the green-leaved alders, showed me that Tom had sprung game. The next second I heard

the sharp questing of the spaniel Dan, followed by Harry's—"Charge!—down, cha-arge, you little thief—down to cha-arge, will you!"

But it was all in vain—for on he went furious and fast, and the next moment the thick whirring of a partridge reached my excited ears. Carefully, eagerly, I gazed out to mark the wary bird; but the discharge of Harry's piece assured me, as I thought, that further watch was needless; and stupidly enough I dropped the muzzle of my gun.

Just at the self-same point of time—"Mark, mark, Frank!" shouted Archer; "mark! there are a brace of them;"—and as he spoke, gliding with speed scarcely inferior to a bullet's flight upon their balanced pinions, the noble birds swept passed me, so close that I could have struck them with a riding whip.

Awfully fluttered was I, I confess; but by a species of involuntary and instinctive consideration I rallied instantly, and became cool. The grouse had seen me, and wheeled diverse; one darting to the right, through a small opening between a cedar-bush and a tall hemlock—the other skimming through the open oak woods a little toward the left.

At such a crisis thought comes in a second's space; and I have often fancied that in times of emergency or great surprise, a man deliberates more promptly, and more prudently withal, than when he has full time to let his second thought trench on his first and mar it. So was it in this case with me. At half a glance I saw, that if I meant to get both birds, the right-hand fugitive must be the first, and that with all due speed; for but a few yards further he would have gained a brake which would have laughed to scorn Lord Kennedy or Harry T——r.

Pitching my gun up to my shoulder, both barrels loaded with Eley's *red* wire cartridge, No. 6, I gave him a snap shot, and had the satisfaction of seeing him keeled well over, not wing-tipped or leg-broken, but fairly riddled by the concentrated charge of something within thirty yards. Turning as quick as light, I caught a fleet sight of the other, which by a rapid zigzag was now flying full across my front, certainly over forty-five yards distant, among a growth of thick-set saplings—the hardest shot, in my opinion, that can be selected to test a quick and steady sportsman. I gave it him, and down he

came too—killed dead—that I knew, for I had shot full half-a-yard before him. Just as I dropped my butt to load, the hill began to echo with the vociferous yells of master Dan, the quick redoubled cracks of Harry's heavy dog-whip, and his incessant rating—"Down, cha-arge! for sha-ame! Dan, Dan! down, cha-arge! for shame!—broken at times by the impatient oaths of Tom Draw, in the gully, who had, it seems, knocked down two woodcocks, neither of which he could bag, owing to the depth and instability of the wet bog.

"Quit, quit, d—n you! quit there, leatherin' that brute! Quit, I say, or I'll send a shot at you! Come here, Archer—I say, come here! there be the darndest lot of droppins here, I ever see—full twenty cock, I swon!"

But still the scourge continued to resound, and still the raving of the spaniel excited Tom's hot ire.

"Frank Forester!" exclaimed he once again. "Do see, now; Harry *missed* them partridge, and so he licks the poor dumb brute for it. I wish I were a spaniel, and he'd try it on with me!"

"I will, too," answered Archer with a laugh;

I will too, if you wish it, though you are not a spaniel, nor any thing else half so good. And why, pray, should I not scourge this wild little imp? he ran slap into the best pack of partridge I have seen this two years—fifteen or sixteen birds. I wonder they're not scattered—it's full late to find them packed."

"Did you kill ere a one?" Tom halloaed; "not one, either of you?"

"I did," answered Harry; "I nailed the old cock-bird, and a rare dog he is!—two pounds, good weight, I warrant him," he added, weighing him as he spoke. "Look at the crimson round his eye, Frank, like a cock pheasant's, and his black ruff or tippet. By George! but he's a beauty. And what did you do?" he continued.

"I bagged a brace—the only two that crossed me."

"Did you, though?" exclaimed Archer, with no small expression of surprise; "did you, though? that's prime work; it takes a thorough workman to bag a double shot upon October partridge! But come, we must go down to Tom; hark how the old hound keeps bawling!"

Well, down we went. The spaniels quickly

retrieved his dead birds, and flushed some fifteen more, of which we gave a clean account—Harry making up for lost time by killing six cock, right and left, almost before they topped the bushes—seven more fell to me, but single birds all of them, and but one brace to Tom, who now began to wax indignant; for Archer, as I saw, for fun's sake, was making it a point to cut down every bird that rose to him, before he could get up his gun, and then laughed at him for being fat and slow. But the laugh was on Tom's side before long, for while we were yet in the valley, the report of a gun came faintly down the wind from beyond the hill, and as we all looked out attentively, a partridge skimmed the brow, flying before the wind at a tremendous pace, and skated across the valley without stooping from his altitude. I stood the first, and fired, a yard at least ahead of him—on he went, unharmed and undaunted; bang went my second barrel—still on he went, the faster, as it seemed, for the weak insult.

Harry came next, and he too fired twice, and—tell it not in Gath!—missed *twice*. “Now, Fat-guts!” shouted Archer, not altogether in his most amiable or pleasing tones; and sure enough

up went the old man's piece—roundly it echoed with its mighty charge—a cloud of feathers drifted away in a long line from the slaughtered victim—which fell not direct, so rapid was its previous flight, but darted onward in a long declining tangent, and struck the rocky soil with a thud clearly audible where we stood, full a hundred yards from the spot where it fell!

He bagged, amid Tom's mighty exultation, forward again we went, and in a short half-hour got into the remainder of the pack which we had flushed before, in some low tangled thorn cover, among which they lay well, and we made havoc of them. And here the oddest accident I ever witnessed in the field took place—so odd, that I am half ashamed to write it—but where's the odds? for it is true.

A fine cock-bird was flushed close at Tom's feet, and went off to the left, Harry and I both standing to the right; he blazed away, and at the shot the bird sprung up six or eight feet into the air, with a sharp staggering flutter. "Killed dead!" cried I; "well done again, fat Tom!" But to my great surprise the partridge gathered wing, and flew on, feebly at first, and dizzily, but

gaining strength more and more as he went on the farther. At the last, after a long flight, he treed in a small leafless pine.

"Run after him, Frank," Archer called to me, "you are the lightest; and we'll beat up the swale till you return. You saw the tree he took?"

"Aye, aye!" said I, preparing to make off.

"Well, he sits near the top—now mind me! no chivalry, Frank! give him no second chance—a ruffed grouse, darting downward from a tall pine-tree, is a shot to balk the devil—it's full five to one that you shoot over and behind him—give him no mercy!"

Off I went, and, after a brisk trot, five or six minutes' long, reached my tree, saw my bird perched on a broken limb close to the time-blanchéd trunk, cocked my Joe Manton, and was in the very act of taking aim, when something so peculiar in the motion of the bird attracted me, that I paused. He was nodding like a sleepy man, and seemed with difficulty to retain his foothold. While I was gazing, he let go, pitched headlong, fluttered his wings in the death-struggle, yet in air, and struck the ground close at my feet, stone-dead. Tom's first shot had cut off the

whole crown of the head, with half the brain and the right eye; and after that the bird had power to fly five or six hundred yards, and then to cling upon its perch for at least ten minutes.

Rejoining my companions, we again went onward, slaying and bagging as we went, till, when the sun was at meridian, we sat down beside the brook to make our frugal meal—not to-day of grilled woodcock and champagne, but of hard eggs, salt, biscuit, and Scotch whiskey—not so bad either—nor were we disinclined to profit by it. We were still smoking on the marge, when a shot right ahead told us that our outskirting party was at hand.

All in an instant were on the alert; in twenty minutes we joined forces, and compared results. We had twelve partridge, five rabbits, seventeen woodcock; they, six gray squirrels, seven partridge, and one solitary cock—Tim proud as Lucifer at having led the field. But his joy now was at an end, for to his charge the setters were committed to be led in leash, while we shot on, over the spaniels. Another dozen partridge, and eighteen rabbits, completed our last bag in the Woodlands.

Late was it when we reached the Teachmans' hut—and long and deep was the carouse that followed; and when the moon had sunk and we were turning in, Tom Draw swore, with a mighty oath of deepest emphasis, that since we had passed a week with him, he'd take a seat down in the wagon, and see the Beacon Races. So we filled round once more, and clinked our glasses to bind the joyous compact, and turned in happy.

DAY THE SEVENTH.

ONCE more we were compelled to change our purpose.

When we left Tom Draw's, it had been, as we thought, finally decided that we were for this bout to visit that fair village no more ; but when that worthy announced his own determination to accompany us on our homeward route, and when we had taken into consideration the fact, that, independent of Tom's two hundred and fifty weight of solid flesh, we had two noble bucks, beside quail, partridge, woodcock, and rabbit, almost innumerable, to transport, in addition to our two selves and Timothy, with the four dogs, and lots of luggage—when we, I say, considered all this, it became apparent that another vehicle must be provided for our return. So during the last jorum, it had been put to the vote and unanimously carried that we should start for Tom's, by

a retrograde movement, at four o'clock in the morning, breakfast with him, and rig up some drag or other wherein Timothy might get the two deer and the dogs, as best he might, into the city.

"As for us," said Harry, "we will go down the other road, Tom, over the back-bone of the mountain, dine with old Colonel Beams, stop at Paterson, and take a taste at the Holy Father's potheen—you may look at the Falls if you like it, Frank, while we're looking at the Innishowen—and so get home to supper. I'll give you both beds for one night—but not an hour longer—my little cellar would be broken, past all doubt, if old Tom were to get *two* nights out of it!"

"Ay'se sure it would," responded Timothy, who had been listening, all attention, mixing meanwhile some strange compound of eggs and rum and sugar. "Whoy, Measter Draa did pratty nigh drink 't out yance—that noight 'at eight chaps, measter Frank, drank oop two baskets o' champagne, and fifteen bottles o' 't breawn sherry—Ay carried six on 'em to bed, Ay'se warrant it."

"That 'll do, Timothy," interposed Archer, unwilling, as I thought, that the secret mysteries of

his establishment should be revealed any further - to the profane ears which were gaping round about us—"that'll do for the present; give Mr. Draw that flip—he's looking at it very angrily, I see; and then turn in, or you'll be late in the morning; and, by George! we must be away by four o'clock at latest, for we have of all sixty miles to make to-morrow, and Tom's fat carcass will try the springs most consumedly, down hill."

Matters thus settled, in we turned, and, as it seemed to me, within five minutes, I was awakened by Harry Archer, who stood beside my bed full dressed, with a candle in his hand.

"Get up," he whispered, "get up, Frank, very quietly; slip on your great-coat and your slippers; we have a chance to serve Tom out—he's not awake for once; and Timothy will have the horses ready in five minutes!"

Up I jumped on the instant, hauled on a rough-frieze pea-jacket, thrust my unstockinged feet into their contrary slippers, and followed Harry, on the tips of my toes, along a creaking passage, guided by the portentous ruckling snorts, which varied the profundity of the fat man's slumbers. When I reached his door, there stood

• Harry, laughing to himself, with a small quiet chuckle, perfectly inaudible at three feet distance, the intensity of which could, however, be judged by the manner in which it shook his whole person. Two huge horse-buckets, filled to the brim, were set beside him ; and he had cut a piece of an old broomstick so as to fit exactly to the width of the passage, across which he had fastened it, at about two feet from the ground, so that it must most indubitably trip up any person who should attempt to run along that dark and narrow thoroughfare.

“ Now, Frank,” said he, “ see here ! I’ll set this bucket here behind the door—we’ll heave the other slap into his face—there he lies, full on the broad of his fat back, with his mouth wide open—and when he jumps up full of fight, which he is sure to do, run you with the candle, which blow out the moment he appears, straight down the passage. I’ll stand back here, and as he trips over that broomstick, which he is certain to do, I’ll pitch the other bucket on his back ; and if he does not think he’s bewitched, I’ll promise not to laugh. I owe him two or three practical jokes, and now I’ve got a chance, so I’ll pay him all at once.”

Well, we peeped in, aided by the glare of the streaming tallow-candle, and there, sure enough, with all the clothes kicked off him, and his immense rotundity protected only from the cold by an exceeding scanty shirt of most ancient cotton, lay Tom, flat on his back, like a stranded porpoise, with his mouth wide open, through which he was puffing and breathing like a broken-winded cab-horse, while through his expanded nostrils he was snoring loudly enough to have awaked the seven sleepers. Neither of us could well stand up for laughing. One bucket was deposited behind the door, and back stood Harry ready to slip behind it also at half a moment's warning—the candlestick was placed upon the floor, which I was to kick over in my flight.

“Stand by to heave!” whispered my trusty comrade—“Heave!” and with the word—flash!—slush!—out went the whole contents of the full pail, two gallons at the least of ice-cold water, slap in the chaps, neck, breast, and stomach of the sound sleeper. With the most wondrous noise that ears of mine have ever witnessed—a mixture of sob, snort, and groan, concluding in the longest and most portentous howl that mouth of man ever

uttered—Tom started out of bed; but, at the very instant I discharged my bucket, I put my foot upon the light, flung down the empty pail, and bolted. Poor devil!—as he got upon his feet the bucket rolled up with its iron handles full against his shins, the oath he swore at which encounter, while he dashed headlong after me, directed by the noise I made on purpose, is most unmentionable. Well knowing where it was, I easily jumped over the stick which barred the passage. Not so Tom—for going at the very top of his pace, swearing like forty troopers all the time, he caught it with both legs just below the knees, and went down with a squelch that shook the whole hut to the roof-tree, while at the self-same instant Harry once again soused him with the contents of the second pail, and made his escape unobserved by the window of Tom's own chamber. Meanwhile I had reached my room, and flinging off my jacket, came running out, with nothing but my shirt and a lighted candle, to Tom's assistance, in which the next moment I was joined by Harry, who rushed in from out of doors with the stable lanthorn.

“What's the row now?” he said, with his face

admirably cool and quiet. What the devil's in the wind?"

"Oh, Archer! grunted poor Tom, in most piteous accents—"them d—d eternal Teachmans—they've murdered me right out! I'll never get over this—ugh, ugh, ugh! Half drowned and smashed up the darndest! Now aint it an eternal shame? Curse them, if I doos n't sarve them out for it, my name's not Thomas Draw!"

"Well, it is not," rejoined Harry, "who in the name of wonder ever called you Thomas? Christened you never were at all, that's evident enough, you barbarous old heathen; but you were certainly *named* Tom."

Swearing, and vowing vengeance on Jem Lyn, and Garry, and the Teachmans—each one of whom, by the way, was sound asleep during this pleasant interlude—and shaking with the cold, and sputtering with uncontrollable fury, the fat man did at length get dressed, and after two or three libations of milk-punch, recovered his temper somewhat, and his spirits altogether.

Although, however, Harry and I told him very frankly that we were not merely the sole planners, but the sole executors, of the trick, it was in vain we spoke—Tom would not have it.

"No—he knew—he knew well enough: did we go for to think he was such an old eternal fool as not to know Jem's voice?—a bloody Decker—he would be the death of him."

And direful, in good truth, I do believe, were the jokes practical, and to him no jokes at all, which poor Jem had to undergo, in expiation of his fancied share in this our misdemeanour.

Scarce had the row subsided, before the horses were announced. Harry and I, and Tom and Timothy, mounted the old green drag; and, with our cheroots lighted—the only lights, by the way, that were visible at all—off we went at a rattling trot, the horses in prime condition, full of fire, biting and snapping at each other, and making their bits clash and jingle every moment. Up the long hill, and through the shadowy wood, they strained, at full ten miles an hour, without a touch of the whip, or even a word of Harry's well-known voice.

We reached the brow of the mountain, where there are four cleared fields—whereon I once saw snow lie five feet deep on the 10th day of April—and an old barn; and thence we looked back through the cold gray gloom of an autumnal morning, three hours at least before the rising of the

sun, while the stars were waning in the dull sky, and the moon had long since set, toward the Greenwood Lake.

Never was there a stronger contrast, than between that lovely sheet of limpid water, as it lay now—cold, dun, and dismal, like a huge plate of pewter, without one glittering ripple, without one clear reflection, surrounded by the wooded hills which, swathed in a dim mist, hung grim and gloomy over its silent bosom—and its bright sunny aspect on the previous day.

Adieu, fair Greenwood Lake, adieu! Many and blithe have been the hours which I have spent around, and in, and on you, and it may well be I shall never see you more—whether reflecting the full fresh greenery of summer, or the rich tints of cisatlantic autumn, or sheeted with the treacherous ice; but never, thou sweet lake, never will thy remembrance fade from my bosom, while one drop of life-blood warms it; so art thou intertwined with memories of happy careless days, that never can return, of friends, truer, perhaps, though rude and humble, than all of prouder seeming. Farewell to thee, fair lake! Long may it be before thy rugged hills be stripped of their green garniture, or thy bright waters marred by

the unpicturesque improvements of man's avarice!*—for truly thou, in this utilitarian age, and at brief distance from America's metropolis, art young, and innocent, and unpolluted, as when the Red man drank of thy pure waters, long centuries ere he dreamed of the pale-faced oppressors, who have already rooted out his race from half its native continent.

Another half-hour brought us down at a rattling pace to the village, and once again we pulled up at Tom's well-known dwelling, just as the day was breaking. A crowd of loiterers, as usual, was gathered even at that untimely season in the large bar-room; and when the clatter of our hoofs and wheels announced us, we found no lack of ready-handed and quick-tongued assistants.

* Marred it has been long ago. A huge dam has been drawn across its outlet, in order to supply a feeder to the Morris Canal—a gigantic piece of unprofitable improvement, made, I believe, like the Erie Railroad, merely as a basis on which for brokers, stock-jobbers, *et id genus omne* of men, too utilitarian and ambitious to be content with earning money honestly, to exercise their prodigious 'cuteness. The effect of this has been to change the bold shores into pestilential submerged swamps, whereon the dead trees still stand, tall, gray, and ghostly; to convert a number of acres of beautiful meadow-land into stagnant grassy shallows; to back up the waters at the lake's head, to the utter destruction of several fine farms; and, last not least, to create fever and ague in abundance, where no such thing had ever been heard tell of before. Certainly, your well-devised improvement is a great thing for a country!

"Take out the horses, Timothy," cried Harry; "unharness them, and rub them down as quickly and as thoroughly as may be; let them have four quarts each, and mind that all is ready for a start before an hour. Meantime, Frank, we will overhaul the game, get breakfast, and hunt up a wagon for the deer and setters."

"Don't bother yourself about no wagon," interposed Tom, "but come you in and liquor, else we shall have you gruntin half the day; and if old roan and my long pig-box wont carry down the deer, why I'll stand treat."

A jorum was prepared, and discussed accordingly; fresh ice produced, the quail and woodcock carefully unpacked, and instantly re-stowed with clean dry straw, a measure which, however, seemed almost supererogatory, since so completely had the external air been excluded from the game-box, that we found not only the lumps of ice in the bottom unthawed, but the flannel which lay over it stiff frozen; the birds were of course perfectly fresh, cool, and in good condition. Our last day's batch, which it was found impossible to get into the box, with all the ruffed grouse, fifty at least in number, were tied up by

the feet, two brace and two brace, and hung in festoons round the inside rails of the front seat and body, while about thirty rabbits dangled by their hind-legs, with their long ears flapping to and fro, from the back seat and baggage rack. The wagon looked, I scarce know how, something between an English stage-coach when the merry days of Christmas are at hand, and a game-huxter's taxed cart.

The business of repacking had been scarce accomplished, and Harry and myself had just retired to change our shooting-jackets and coarse fustians for habiliments more suitable for the day and our destination—New York, to-wit, and Sunday—when forth came Tom, bedizened from top to toe in his most new and knowing rig, and looking now, to do him justice, a most respectable and portly yeoman.

A broad-brimmed, low-crowned, and long-napped white hat, set forth assuredly to the best advantage his rotund, rubicund, good-humoured phiz; a clean white handkerchief circled his sturdy neck, in the voluminous folds of which reposed in placid dignity the mighty collops of his double chin. A bright canary waistcoat of

imported kerseymere, with vast mother-of-pearl buttons, and a broad-skirted coat of bright blue cloth, with glittering brass buttons half the size of 'dollars, covered his upper man; while loose drab trousers of stout double-milled, and a pair of well-blackened boots, completed his attire; so that he looked as different an animal as possible from the unwashed, uncombed, half-naked creature he presented, when lounging in his bar-room in his every-day apparel.

"Why, halloa, Guts!" cried Archer, as he entered, "you've broken out here in a new place altogether."

"Now quit you callin of me Guts," responded Tom, more testily than I had ever heard him speak to Harry, whose every whim and frolic he seemed religiously to venerate and humour; "a fellow doosn't want to have it 'Guts' here, and 'Guts' there, over half a county. Why now it was but a week since, while 'lections was a goin' on, I got a letter from some d—d chaps to Newburg; 'Rouse about now, old Guts, you'll need it this election!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Harry and I almost simultaneously, delighted at Tom's evident annoyance.

“Who wrote it, Tom?”

“That’s what I’d jist give fifty dollars to know now,” replied mine host, clinching his mighty paw.

“Why, what would you do,” said I, “if you did know?”

“Lick him, by George! lick him, in the first place, till he was as nigh dead as I daared lick him, and then I’d make him eat up every darned line of it! But come, come, breakfast’s ready; and while we’re getting through with it, Timothy and Jem Lyn will fix the pig-box, and make the deer all right and tight for travelling!”

No sooner said than done—an ample meal was speedily despatched, and when that worthy came in to announce all ready, for the saving of time Master Timothy was accommodated with a seat at a side-table, which he occupied with becoming dignity, abstaining, as it were, in consciousness of his honourable promotion, from any of the quaint and curious witticisms in which he was wont to indulge, but manducating with vast energy the various good things which were set before him.

It was a clear bright Sabbath morning, as ever shone down on a sinful world, on which we started homeward; and, though I fear there was not quite so much solemnity in our demeanour as

might have best accorded with the notions of over strict professors, I can still answer that with much mirth, much merriment, and much good feeling in our hearts, there was no touch of irreverence, or any taint of what could be called sinful thought. The sun had risen fairly, but the hour was still too early for the sweet peaceful music of the church-going bells to have made their echoes tunable through the rich valley. A merry cavalcade, indeed, we started; Harry leading the way at his usual slap-dash pace, so that one, less a workman than himself, would have said he went up hill and down at the same break-neck pace, and would take all the grit out of his team before he had gone ten miles, while a more accurate observer would have seen almost at a glance, that he varied his rate at almost every inequality of road, that he quartered every rut, avoided every jog or mud hole, husbanded for the very best his horses' strength, never making them either pull or hold a moment longer than was absolutely necessary from the abruptness of the ground.

At his left hand sat I, while Tom, in honour of his superior bulk and weight, occupied with his magnificent and portly person the whole of the back seat, keeping his countenance as sanctified

as possible, and nodding, with some quaint and characteristic observation, to each one of the scattered groups of country-people, which we encountered every quarter of a mile for the first hour of our route, wending their way toward the village church; but, when we reached the forest-mantled road which clombe the mountain, making the arched woods resound to many a jovial catch, or merry hunting chorus.

Mounted sublime on an arm-chair lashed to the fore-part of the pig-box, sat Timothy in state—his legs well muffled in a noble scarlet-fringed buffalo skin, and his body encased in his livery top-coat—the setters and the spaniels crouching most meekly at his feet, and the two noble bucks—the fellow on whose steaks we had already made an inroad, having been left as fat Tom's portion—securely corded down upon a pile of straw, with their sublime and antlered crests drooping all spiritless and humble over the back-board, toward the frozen soil which crashed and rattled under the ponderous hoofs of the magnificent roan horse, Tom's special favourite, which, though full seventeen hands high, and heavy in proportion, yet showing a good strain of blood, trotted away with his huge load at full ten miles an hour.

Plunging into the deep recesses of the Green-woods, hill after hill we scaled, a toilsome length of stony steep ascents, almost precipitous; until we reached the back-bone of the mountain ridge; a rugged, bare, sharp edge of granite rock, without a particle of soil upon it, diving down at an angle not much less than forty-five degrees into a deep ravine, through which thundered and roared a flashing torrent. This fearful descent overpast, and that in perfect safety, we rolled merrily away down hill, till we reached Colonel Beam's tavern, a neat, low-browed, Dutch, stone farm-house, situate in an angle scooped out of a green hill-side, with half-a-dozen tall and shadowy elms before it—a bright crystal stream purling along into the horse-trough through a miniature aqueduct of hollowed logs, and a clear cold spring in front of it, with half-a-score of fat and lazy trout floating in its transparent waters.

A hearty welcome, and a no less hearty meal having been here encountered and despatched, we rattled off again, through laden orchards and rich meadows, passed the confluence of the three bright rivers which issue from their three mountain gorges, to form by their junction the fairest of New Jersey's rivers, the broad Passaic; reached

the small village noted for rum drinking and quarter-racing—hight Pompton—thence by the Preakness mountain, and Mose Canouze's tavern—whereat, in honour of Tom's friend, a worthy of the self-same kidney with himself, we paused awhile—to Paterson, the filthiest town, situate on one of the loveliest rivers in the world, and famous only for the possession, in the person of its Catholic priest, of the finest scholar and best fellow in America, whom we unluckily found not at home, and therefore tasted not, according to friend Harry's promise, the splendid Innishowen which graces at all times his hospitable board.

Eight o'clock brought us to Hoboken, where, by good luck, the ferry-boat lay ready—and nine o'clock had not struck when we three sat down once again about a neat small supper-table, before a bright coal fire in Archer's snuggerly—Tom glorying in the prospect of the races on the morrow, and I regretting that I had brought to its conclusion

MY FIRST WEEK IN THE WOODLANDS.

ON A SECOND VISIT.



THE WAYSIDE INN.

ON a still clear October evening, Frank Forrester and Harry Archer were sitting at the open window of a neat country tavern, in a sequestered nook of Rockland County, looking out upon as beautiful a view as ever gladdened the eyes of wandering amateur or artist.

The house was a large old-fashioned stone mansion, certainly not of later date than the commencement of the Revolution; and probably had been, in its better days, the manor-house of some considerable proprietor:—the windows were of a form very unusual in the States, opening like doors, with heavy wooden mullions and small lattices, while the walls were so thick as to form a deep embrasure, provided with a cushioned win-

dow-seat ; the parlour, in which the friends had taken up their temporary domicile, contained two of these pleasant lounges, the larger looking out due south upon the little garden, with the road before it, and, beyond the road, a prospect—of which more anon ; the other commanding a space of smooth green turf in front of the stables, whereon our old acquaintance, Timothy, was leading to and fro a pair of smoking horses. The dark green drag, with all its winter furniture of gaily decorated bear-skins, stood half seen beneath the low-arched wagon-shed.

The walls of the room—the *best* room of the tavern—were panelled with the dark glossy wood of the black cherry, and a huge mantel-piece of the same material, took up at least one half of the side opposite the larger window, while on the hearth below reposed a glowing bed of red-hot hickory ashes a foot at least in depth, a huge log of that glorious fuel blazing upon the massive andirons. Two large deep gun-cases, a leathern magazine of shot, and sundry canisters of diamond gunpowder, Brough's, were displayed on a long table under the end window—a four-horse whip, and two fly-rods in Indiarubber cases,

stood in the chimney-corner; while, revelling in the luxurious warmth of the piled hearth, lay basking on the rug, three exquisitely formed Blenheim spaniels of the large breed—short-legged and bony, with ears that almost swept the ground as they stood upright, and coats as soft and lustrous as floss silk.

On a round table, which should have occupied the centre of the parlour, now pulled up to the window-seat, whereon reclined the worthies, stood a large pitcher of iced water; a square case-bottle of cut crystal filled, as the flavour which pervaded the whole room sufficiently demonstrated, with superb old Antigua shrub; several large rummers corresponding to the fashion of the bottle; a twisted taper of green wax, and a small silver plate with six or eight cheroots, real manillas.

Supper was evidently over, and the friends, amply feasted, were now luxuriating in the delicious indolence, half dozing, half day-dreaming, of a calm sleepy smoke, modestly lubricated by an occasional sip of the cool beverage before them. If we except a pile of box-coats, capes, and macintoshes of every cut and colour—a travelling liquor-case which, standing open, displayed the

tops of three more bottles similar to that on the table, and spaces lined with velvet for all the glass in use—and another little leathern box, which, like the liquor-case, showed its contents of several silver plates, knives, forks, spoons, flasks of sauce, and condiments of different kinds—the whole interior, as a painter would have called it, has been depicted with all accuracy.

Without, the view on which the windows opened was indeed most lovely. The day had been very bright and calm; there was not a single cloud in the pale transparent heaven, and the sun, which had shone cheerfully all day from his first rising in the east, till now when he was hanging like a ball of bloody fire in the thin filmy haze which curtained the horizon, was still shooting his long rays, and casting many a shadow over the slopes and hollows which diversified the scene.

Immediately across the road lay a rich velvet meadow, luxuriant, still and green—for the preceding month had been rather wet, and frost had not set in to nip its verdure—sloping down southerly to a broad shallow trout stream, which rippled all glittering and bright over a pebbly bed, although the margin on the hither side was some-

what swampy, with tufts of willows and bushes of dark alder fringing it here and there, and dipping their branches in its waters—the farther bank was skirted by a tall grove of maple, hickory, and oak, with a thick undergrowth of sumach arrayed in all the gorgeous garniture of autumn purples and brilliant scarlets and chrome yellows, mixed up and harmonized with the dark copper foliage of a few sere beeches, and the gray trunks apparent here and there through the thin screen of the fast falling leaves.

Beyond this grove, the bank rose bold and rich in swelling curves, with a fine corn-field, topped already to admit every sunbeam to the ripening ears. A buckwheat stubble, conspicuous by its deep ruddy hue, and two or three brown pastures divided by high fences, along the lines of which flourished a copious growth of cat-briers and sumachs, with here and there a goodly tree waving above them, made up the centre of the picture. Beyond this cultured knoll there seemed to be a deep pitch of the land clothed with a hanging wood of heavy timber; and, above this again, the soil surged upward into a huge and round-topped hill, with several golden stubbles,

shining out from the frame-work of primeval forest, which, dark with many a mighty pine, covered the mountain to the top, except where at its western edge it showed a huge and rifted precipice of rock.

To the right, looking down the stream, the hills closed in quite to the water's brink on the far side, rough and uncultivated, with many a blue and misty peak discovered through the gaps in their bold broken outline, and a broad lake-like sheet, as calm and brightly pictured as a mirror, reflecting their inverted beauties so wondrously distinct and vivid, that the amazed eye might not recognise the parting between reality and shadow. An old gray mill deeply embosomed in a clump of weeping willows, still verdant, though the woods were sere and waving leafless, explained the nature of that tranquil pool, while, beyond that, the hills swept down from the rear of the building which contained the parlour whence the two sportsmen gazed, and seemed entirely to bar the valley, so suddenly, and in so short a curve, did it wind round their western shoulder. To the left-hand, the view was closed by a thick belt of second growth, through which the sandy road and glitter-

ing stream wandered away together on their mazy path, and over which the summits of yet loftier and more rugged steeps towered heavenward.

Over this valley they had for some time gazed in silence, till now the broad sun sank behind the mountains, and the shrill whistle of the quail, which had been momentarily audible during the whole afternoon, ceased suddenly; four or five night hawks might be seen wheeling high in pursuit of their insect prey through the thin atmosphere, and the sharp chirrup of a solitary katydid, the last of its summer tribe, was the only sound that interrupted the faint rush of the rapid stream, which came more clearly on the ear now that the louder noises of busy babbling daylight had yielded to the stillness of approaching night. Before long a bright gleam shot through the tufted outline of a dark wooded hill, and shortly after, just when a gray and misty shadow had settled down upon the half seen landscape, the broad full moon came soaring up above the tree-tops, pouring her soft and silver radiance over the lovely valley, and investing its rare beauties with something of romance—a sentiment which belongs not to the gay gaudy sunshine.

Just at this moment, while neither of the friends felt much inclined to talk, the door opened suddenly, and Timothy's black head was thrust in, with a query if "they didn't need t' waax candles?"

"Not yet, Tim," answered Archer, "not yet for an hour or so—but hold a minute—how have the horses fed?"

"T' ould gray drayed off directly, and he's gane tull t' loike bricks; but t' bay 's no but sillyish—he keeps a breaking oot again for iver; and sae Ay'se give him a hot maash enow."

"That's right. I saw he wasn't quite up to the mark the last ten miles or so. If he don't dry off now, give him a cordial ball out of the tool-chest—one of the number 3—camphire and cardamums and ginger, a clove of garlic, and treacle *quantum suff.*: hey, Frank? that will set him to rights, I warrant it. Now, have you dined yourself, or supped, as the good people here insist on calling it?"

"Weel, Ay wot, have I, Sur," responded Timothy; "an hour ago and better."

"Exactly; then step out yourself into the kitchen, and make us a good cup of our own

coffee, strong and hot, do you see? and when that's done, bring it in with the candles; and, hark you, run up to the bed-room and bring my netting-needles down, and the ball of silk twist, and the front of that new game-bag I began the other night. If you were not as lazy as possible, friend Frank, you would bring your fly-book out, when the light comes, and tie some hackles."

"Perhaps I may, when the light comes," Forester answered; "but I'm in no hurry for it; I like of all things to look out, and watch the changes of the night over a landscape even less beautiful than this. One half the pleasure of field sports to me, is other than the mere excitement. If there were nothing but the eagerness of the pursuit, and the gratification of successful vanity, fond as I am of shooting, I should, I believe, have long since wearied of it; but there are so many other things connected intimately with it—the wandering among the loveliest scenery, the full enjoyment of the sweetest weather, the learning the innumerable and all-wondrous attributes and instincts of animated nature—all these are what make up to me the rapture I derive from woodcraft! Why, such a scene as this—a scene

which how few, save the vagrant sportsman, or the countryman who but rarely appreciates the picturesque, have ever witnessed—is enough, with the pure and tranquil thoughts it calls up in the heart, to plead a trumpet-tongued apology for all the vanity, and uselessness, and cruelty, and what not, so constantly alleged against our field sports.”

“ Oh! yes,” cried Harry; “yes, indeed, Frank, I perfectly agree with you. But all that last is mere humbug—humbug, too, of the lowest and most foolish order: I never hear a man droning about the cruelty of field sports, but I set him down, on the spot, either as a hypocrite or a fool, and probably a glorious union of the two. When man can exist without killing myriads of animals with every breath of vital air he draws, with every draught of water he imbibes, with every footstep he prints upon the turf or gravel of his garden—when he abstains from every sort of animal food; and, above all, when he abstains from his great pursuit of torturing his fellow men—then let him prate, if he will, of sportsmen’s cruelty.

“ For show me one trade, one profession,

wherein one man's success is not based upon another's failure; all rivalry, all competition, triumph and rapture to the winner, disgrace and anguish to the loser! And then these fellows, fattened on widows' tears and orphans' misery, preach you pure homilies about the cruelty of taking life. But you are quite right about the combination of pleasures—the excitement, too, of quick motion through the fresh air—the sense of liberty amid wide plains, or tangled woods, or on the wild hill-tops—this, surely, to the reflective sportsman—and who can be a true sportsman, and not reflective?—is the great charm of his pursuit.”

“And do you not think that this pleasure exists in a higher degree here in America, than in our own England?”

“As how, Frank? I don't take.”

“Why, in the greater, I will not say beauty—for I don't think there *is* greater natural beauty in the general landscape of the States—but novelty and wildness of the scenery. Even the richest and most cultivated tracts of America that I have seen, except the Western part of New York, which is unquestionably the ugliest, and dullest, and most unpoetical region on earth, have a young

untamed freshness about them, which you do not find in England.

“ In the middle of the high-tilled and fertile corn-field you come upon some sudden hollow, tangled with brake and bush, which hedge in some small pool where float the brilliant cups and smooth leaves of the water lily, and whence on your approach up springs the blue-winged teal or gorgeous wood-duck. Then the long sweeping woodlands, embracing in themselves every variety of ground, deep marshy swamp, and fertile level thick-set with giant timber; and sandy barrens with their scrubby undergrowth, and difficult rocky steeps; and above all, the seeming and comparative solitude—the dinner carried along with you and eaten under the shady tree, beside the bubbling basin of some spring—all this is vastly more exciting than walking through trim stubbles and rich turnip fields, and lunching on bread and cheese and home-brewed in a snug farmhouse. In short, field sports here have a richer range, are much more various, wilder—”

“ Hold there, Frank; hold hard there! I cannot concede *the wilder*, not the *really* wilder—seemingly they are wilder; for, as you say, the scenery

is wilder—and all the game, with the exception of the English snipe, being wood-haunters, you are led into rougher districts. But oh! no, no! the field sports are not really wilder—in the Atlantic States at least—nor half so wild as those of England.”

“I should like to hear you prove that, Archer,” answered Frank, “for I am constantly beset with the superiority of American field sports to tame English preserve shooting.”

“Pooh, pooh! that is only by people who know nothing about either; by people, who fancy that a preserve means a park full of tame birds, instead of a range, perhaps, of many thousand acres, of the very wildest, barest moorland, stocked with the wariest and shyest of the feathered race, the red grouse. But what I mean to say is this, that every English game-bird—to use an American phrase—is wariest and wilder than its compeer in the United States. Who, for instance, ever saw in England, Ireland, or Scotland, eighteen or twenty snipe or woodcock lying within a space of twelve yards square, two or three dogs pointing in the midst of them, and the birds rising one by one, the gunshots rattling over them, till ten or twelve

are on the ground before there is time to bag one ?

“ English partridge will, I grant, do this sometimes, on very warm days in September ; but let a man go out with his heavy gun and steady dog late in December or the month preceding it ; let him see thirty or more covies—as on good ground he may ; let him see every covey rise at a hundred yards, and fly a mile ; let him be proud and glad to bag his three or four brace ; and then tell me that there is any sport in these Atlantic States so wild as English winter field shooting.

“ Of grouse shooting on the bare hills, which, by the way, are wilder, more solitary far, and more aloof from the abodes of men, than any thing between Boston and the Green Bay, I do not of course speak ; as it confessedly is the most wild and difficult kind of shooting.

“ Still less of deer-stalking—for Scrope’s book has been read largely even here ; and no man, how prejudiced soever, can compare the standing at a deer-path all day long, waiting till a great timid beast is driven up within ten yards of your muzzle, with that extraordinary sport on bald and barren mountains, where nothing but vast and muscular

exertion, the eye of the eagle, and the cunning of the serpent, can bring you within range of the wild cattle of the hills.

“ Battue shooting, I grant, is tame work ; but partridge shooting, after the middle of October, is infinitely wilder, requiring more exertion and more toil than quail shooting. Even the pheasant—the tamest of our English game—is infinitely bolder on the wing than the ruffed grouse, or New York partridge ; while about snipe and woodcock there exists no comparison—since by my own observation, confirmed by the opinion of old sportsmen, I am convinced that nine-tenths of the snipe and cock bagged in the States, are killed between fifteen and twenty paces ; while, I can safely say, I never saw a full snipe rise in England within that average distance. Quail even, the hardest bird to kill, the swiftest and the boldest on the wing, are very rarely killed further than twenty-five to thirty, whereas you may shoot from daylight to sunset in England, after October, and not pick up a single partridge within the farthest, as a minimum distance.”

“ Well, that ’s all true, I grant,” said Forester ; “ yet even you allow that it is harder to kill game

here than at home ; and if I do not err, I have heard you admit that the best shot in all England could be beat easily by the crack shots on this side ;—how does all this agree ?”

“ Why, very easily, I think,” Harry replied ; “ though to the last remark I added, *in his first season here*. Now that American field sports are wilder in one sense, I grant readily ; with the exception of snipe shooting here, and grouse shooting in Scotland, the former being tamer, in all senses, than any English, the latter wilder in all senses than any American, field sport.

“ American sporting, however, is certainly wilder, insomuch as it is pursued on much wilder ground, insomuch as we have a greater variety of game, and insomuch as we have many more snap shots and fewer fair dead points.

“ Harder it is, I grant ; for it is all, with scarcely an exception, followed in very thick and heavy covert—covert to which the thickest woods I ever saw in England are but as open ground. Moreover, the woods are so very large that the gun must be close up with the dog ; and consequently the shots must, half of them, be fired in attitudes most awkward, and in ground which

would, I think, at home, be generally styled impracticable. Thirdly, all the summer shooting here is made with the leaf on—with these thick tangled matted swamps clad in the thickest foliage.

“Your dogs must beat within twenty yards at farthest, and when they stand, you are aware of the fact rather by ceasing to hear their motion than by seeing them at point; I am satisfied that of six *pointed* shots in summer shooting, three at the least must be treated as snap shots. Many birds must be shot at, and many *are* killed, which are never seen at all till they are bagged; and many men here will kill three out of four summer woodcock, day in and day out, where an English sportsman, however crack a shot he might be, would give the thing up in despair in half-an-hour.

“Practice, however, soon brings this all to rights. The first season I shot here, I was a very fair, indeed a good young shot, when I came out hither; not at all *crack*, but decidedly better than the common run. The first day I shot was on 4th of July, 1832; the place, Seer’s Swamp, the open end of it—the witness, old Tom Draw—and there I missed, in what we *now* call open covert,

fourteen birds running, and left the place in despair. I could not, though I missed at home by shooting too quick—I could not, for the life of me, shoot quick enough. Even you, Frank, shoot three times as well as you did when you began here; yet you began in autumn, which is decidedly a great advantage, and came on by degrees, so that the following summer you were not so much nonplussed, though I remember the first day or two you *bitched* it badly.”

“Well, I believe I must knock under, Harry,” Forester answered; “and here comes Timothy with the coffee, and so we will to bed—that taken; though I do want to argufy with you on some of your other notions about dogs, scent, and so forth. But do you think the Commodore will join us here to-morrow?”

“No, I don’t *think* so,” Harry said, “I know it. Did not he arrive in New York last first of July, from a yachting tour, at four o’clock in the afternoon—receive my note, saying that I was off to Tom’s that morning, and start by the Highlander at five that evening? Did he not get a team at Whited’s, and travel all night through, and find me just sitting down to breakfast, and change his

toggery, and out, and walk all day—like a trump as he is? And did not we, by the same token, bag—besides twenty-five more killed that we could not find—one hundred and fifteen cock between ten o'clock and sunset, while you, you false deceiver, were kicking up your heels in Buffalo? Is not all this a true bill, and have you now the impudence to ask me whether *I think* the Commodore will come? I only wish I was as sure of a day's sport to-morrow, as I am of his being to the fore at luncheon time."

"At luncheon time, hey? I did not know that you looked for him so early. Will he be in time, then, for the afternoon's shooting?"

"Why, certainly he will," returned Archer. "The wind has been fair up the river all day long, though it has been but light; and the Ianthe will run up before it like a race-horse. I should not be much surprised if he were here to breakfast."

"And that we may be up in time for him, if perchance he should, let us to bed forthwith," said Frank, with a heavy yawn.

"I am content," answered Harry, finishing his cup of coffee, and flinging the stump of his cheroot

into the fire. "Good-night; Timothy will call you in the morning."

"Good-night, old fellow."

And the friends parted merrily, in prospect of a pleasant day's sport on the morrow.

THE MORNING'S SPORT.

It was not yet broad daylight when Harry Archer, who had, as was usual with him on his sporting tours, arisen with the lark, was sitting in the little parlour I have before described, close to the chimney-corner, where a bright lively fire was already burning, and spreading a warm cheerful glow through the apartment.

The large round table, drawn up close to the hearth, was covered with a clean, though coarse white cloth, and laid for breakfast, with two cups and saucers, flanked by as many plates and egg-cups, although as yet no further preparations for the morning meal, except the presence of a huge home-made loaf and a large roll of rich golden-hued butter, had been made by the neat-handed Phillis of the country inn. Two candles were lighted, for though the day had broken, the sun was not yet high enough to cast his rays into that

deep and rock-walled valley, and by their light Archer was busy with the game-bag, the front of which he had finished netting on the previous night.

Frank Forester had not as yet made his appearance; and still, while the gigantic copper kettle bubbled and steamed away upon the hearth, discouraging eloquent music, and servant after servant bustled in, one with a cold quail-pie, another with a quart jug of cream, and fresh eggs ready to be boiled by the fastidious epicures in person, he steadily worked on, housewife and saddler's silk and wax and scissors ready to his hand; and when at last the door flew open, and the delinquent comrade entered, he flung his finished job upon the chair, and gathered up his implements, with—

“Now, Frank, let's lose no time, but get our breakfast. Halloa, Tim! bring the rockingham and the tea-chest; do you hear?”

“Well, Harry, so you've done the game-bag,” exclaimed the other, as he lifted it up and eyed it somewhat superciliously. “Well, it is a good one, certainly; but you are the d—dest fellow I ever met, to give yourself unnecessary trouble.

Here you have been three days about this bag, hard all; and when it's done, it is not half as good a one as you can buy at Cooper's for a dollar, with all this new-fangled machinery of loops and buttons, and I don't know what."

"And you, Master Frank," retorted Harry, nothing daunted, "to be a good shot and a good sportsman—which, with some few exceptions, I must confess you are—are the most culpably and wilfully careless about your appointments I ever met. I don't call a man half a sportsman who has not everything he wants at hand for an emergency, at half a minute's notice. Now it so happens that you cannot get in New York at all, anything like a decent game-bag—a little fancy-worked French or German jigmaree machine you can get anywhere, I grant, that will do well enough for a fellow to carry on his own shoulders, who goes out *robin-gunning*; but nothing for your man to carry, wherein to keep your birds cool, fresh, and unmutilated. Now, these loops and buttons, at which you laugh, will make the difference of a week at least in the birds' keeping, if every hour or so you empty your pockets—wherein, I take it for granted, you put your birds

as fast as you bag them—smooth down their plumage gently, stretch their legs out, and hang them by the heads, running the button down close to the neck of each. In this way this bag, which is, as you see, half a yard long, by a quarter and half a quarter deep, made double, one bag of fustian with a net front, which makes two pockets, will carry fifty-one quail or woodcock, no one of them pressing upon, or interfering with another, and it would carry sixty-eight if I had put another row of loops in the inner bag, which I did not, that I might have the bottom vacant to carry a few spare articles, such as a bag of Westley Richards' caps, and a couple of dozen of Eley's cartridges."

"Oh! that's all very well," said Frank, "but who the deuce can be at the bore of it?"

"Why be at the bore of shooting at all, for that matter?" replied Harry. "I, for one, think that if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing *well*—and I can't bear to kill a hundred or a hundred and fifty birds, as our party almost always do out here, and then be obliged to throw them away, just for want of a little care. Why, I was shooting summer cock one July day two

years ago—there had been heavy rain in the early morning, and the grass and bushes were very wet—Jem Blake was with me, and we had great sport, and he laughed at me like the deuce for taking my birds out of my pocket at the end of every hour's sport, and making Timothy smooth them down carefully, and bag them all after my fashion. Egad, I had the laugh though, when we got home at night!"

"How so?" asked Frank; "in what way had you the laugh?"

"Simply in this—a good many of the birds were very hard shot, as is always the case in summer shooting, and all of them got more or less wet, as did the pockets of Jem's shooting jacket, wherein he persisted in carrying his birds all day—the end was, that when we got home at night, it having been a close, hot, steamy day, he had not one bird which was not more or less tainted*—and, as you know of course, when taint has once begun, nothing can check it."

"Ay, ay; well, that indeed's a reason; if you can't buy such a bag, especially."

"Well, you cannot then, I can tell you! and

* This is a fact—thirty birds were thrown away at night, which had been killed that same day.

I'm glad you're convinced for once; and here comes breakfast—so now let us to work, that we may get on our ground as early as may be. For quail you cannot be too early; for if you don't find them while they are rambling on their feeding ground, it is a great chance if you find them at all."

"But, after all, you can only use up one or two bebies or so; and, that done, you *must* hunt for them in the basking time of day, after all's done and said," replied Frank, who seemed to have got up somewhat paradoxically given that morning.

"Not at all, Frank, not at all," answered Harry; "that is, if you know your ground; and know it to be well stocked; and have a good marker with you."

"Oh! this is something new of yours—some strange device fantastical; let's have it, pray."

"Certainly you shall; you shall have it *now* in precept, and in an hour or two in practice. You see those stubbles on the hill—in those seven or eight fields there are, or at least should be, some five bebies; there is good covert, good *easy* covert all about, and we can mark our birds down easily; now, when I find one bevy, I shall get as many

barrels into it as I can, mark it down as correctly as possible, and then go and look for another."

"What, and not follow it up? Now, Harry, that's mere stuff; wait till the scent's gone cold, and till the dogs can't find them? 'Gad, that's clever, any way!"

"Exactly the reverse, friend Frank—exactly the reverse. If you follow up a bevy, of *quail* mark you, on the instant, it's ten to one almost that you don't spring them. If, on the contrary, you wait for half-an-hour, you are sure of them. How it is, I cannot precisely tell you. I have sometimes thought that quail have the power of holding in their scent, whether purposely or naturally—from the effect of fear, perhaps, contracting the pores, and hindering the escape of the effluvia—I know not, but I am far from being convinced even now that it is not so. A very good sportsman, and true friend of mine, insists upon it that birds give out no scent except from the feet, and that, consequently, if they squat without running they cannot be found. I do not, however, believe the theory, and hold it to be disproved by the fact that dead birds do give out scent. I have generally observed that there is no

difficulty in retrieving dead quail, but that, wounded, they are constantly lost. But, be that as it may, the birds pitch down, each into the best bit of covert he can find, and squat there like so many stones, leaving no trail or taint upon the grass or bushes, and being of course proportionally hard to find; in half-an-hour they will begin, if not disturbed, to call and travel, and you can hunt them up, without the slightest trouble. If you have a very large tract of country to beat, and birds are very scarce, of course it would not answer to pass on; nor ever, even if they are plentiful, in wild or windy weather, or in large open woods; but where you have fair ground, lots of birds, and fine weather, I would always beat on in a circuit, for the reason I have given you. In the first place, every bevy you flush flies from its feeding to its basking ground, so that you get over all the first early, and *know* where to look afterward; instead of killing off one bevy, and then going blundering on, at blind guess work, and finding nothing. In the second place, you have a chance of driving two or three bexies into one brake, and of getting sport proportionate; and in the third place, as I have told you, you

are much surer of finding marked birds after an hour's lapse, than on the moment."

"I will do you the justice to say," Forester replied, "that you always make a tolerably good fight in support of your opinions; and so you have done now; but I want to hear something more about this matter of holding scent—facts! facts! and let me judge for myself."

"Well, Frank, give me a bit more of that pie in the meantime, and I will tell you the strongest case in point I ever witnessed. I was shooting near Stamford, in Connecticut, three years ago, with C——K——, and another friend; we had three as good dogs out, as ever had a trigger drawn over them. My little imported yellow and white setter, Chase, after which this old rascal is called—which Mike Sandford considered the best-nosed dog he had ever broken—a capital young pointer dog of K——'s, which has since turned out, as I hear, superlative, and P——'s old and staunch setter, Count. It was the middle of a fine autumn day, and the scenting was very uncommonly good. One of our beaters flushed a bevy of quail very wide of us, and they came over our heads down a steep hill-side, and all lighted in a small

circular hollow, without a bit of underbrush or even grass, full of tall thrifty oak trees, of perhaps twenty-five years' growth. They were not much out of gun-shot, and we all three distinctly saw them light; and I observed them flap and fold their wings as they settled. We walked straight to the spot, and beat it five or six times over, not one of our dogs ever drawing, and not one bird rising. We could not make it out; my friends thought they had treed, and laughed at me when I expressed my belief that they were still before us, under our very noses. The ground was covered only by a deep bed of sere decaying oak leaves. Well, we went on, and beat all round the neighbourhood within a quarter of a mile, and did not find a bird, when lo! at the end of perhaps half-an-hour, we heard them calling—followed the cry back to that very hollow; the instant we entered it, all the three dogs made game, drawing upon three several birds, roaded them up, and pointed steady, and we had half-an-hour's good sport, and we were *all* convinced that the birds had been there *all* the time. I have seen many instances of the same kind, and more particularly with wing-tipped birds, but none, I think, so tangible as this."

"Well, I am not a convert, Harry; but, as the Chancellor said, I doubt."

"And that I consider not a little, from such a positive wretch as you are; but, come, we have done breakfast, and it's broad daylight. Come, Timothy, on with the bag and belts; he breakfasted before we got up, and gave the dogs a bite."

"Which dogs do you take, Harry; and do you use cartridge?"

"Oh! the setters for the morning; they are the only fellows for the stubble; we should be all day with the cockers; even setters, as we *must* break them here for wood shooting, have not enough of speed or dash for the open. Cartridges? yes! I shall use a loose charge in my right, and a *blue* cartridge in my left; later in the season, I use a *blue* in my right and a *red* in my left. It just makes the difference between killing with both, or with one barrel. The *blue* kills all of twenty, and the *red* all of thirty-five yards further than loose shot; and they kill *clean*!"

"Yet many good sportsmen dislike them," Frank replied; "they say they ball!"

"They do not *now*, if you load with them pro-

perly; formerly they would do so at times, but that defect is now rectified—with the *blue* and *red* cartridges at least—the *green*, which are only fit for wild fowl, or deer-shooting, will do so sometimes, but very rarely; and they will execute surprisingly. For a bad or uncertain rifle-shot, the *green* cartridge with SG shot is the thing; twelve good sized-slugs, propelled with force enough to go through an inch plank, at eighty yards, within a compass of three feet; but no wad must be used, either upon the cartridge, or between that and the powder; the small end must be inserted downward, and the cartridge must be chosen so that the wad at the top shall fit the gun, the case being two sizes less than the calibre. With these directions no man need make a mistake; and, if he can cover a bird fairly, and is cool enough not to fire within twenty yards, he will never complain of cartridges, after a single trial. Remember, too, that *vice versa* to the rule of a loose charge, the *heavier* you load with powder, the *closer* will your cartridge carry. The men who do not like cartridges are, you may rely upon it, of the class which prefers scattering guns. I always use them, except in July shooting, and

I shall even put a few *red* in my pockets, in case the wind should get up in the afternoon. Besides which, I always take along two buckshot cartridges, in case of *happening*, as Timothy would say, on some big varmint. I have four pockets in my shooting waistcoat, each stitched off into four compartments, each of which holds, *erect*, one cartridge—you cannot carry them loose in your pocket, as they are very apt to break. Another advantage of this is, that in no way can you carry shot with so little inconvenience as to weight; beside which, you load one third quicker, and your gun *never* leads.”

“Well, I believe I will take some to-day; but don’t you wait for the Commodore?”

“No; he drives up, as I told you, from Nyack, where he lands from his yacht, and will be here at twelve o’clock to luncheon; if he had been coming for the morning shooting, he would have been here ere this. By that time we shall have bagged twenty-five or thirty quail, and a ruffed grouse or two; beside driving two or three beves down into the meadows and the alder bushes by the stream, which are quite full of woodcock. After luncheon, with the Commo-

dore's aid, we will pick up these stragglers, and all the timber-doodles!"

In another moment the setters were unchained, and came careering at the top of their speed into the breakfast-room, where Harry stood before the fire, loading his double gun, while Timothy was buttoning on his left leggin. Frank, meanwhile, had taken up his gun, and quietly sneaked out of the door, two flat irregular reports explaining, half a moment after, the purport of his absence.

"Well now, Frank, that *is*"—expostulated Harry—"that *is* just the most snobbish thing I ever saw you do; aint you ashamed of yourself now, you genuine cockney?"

"Not a bit; my gun has not been used these three months, and something *might* have got into the chamber."

"Something *might not*, if when you cleaned it last you had laid a wad in the centre of a bit of greased rag three inches square and rammed it about an inch down the barrel, leaving the ends of the linen hanging out. And by running your rod down you could have ascertained the fact, without unnecessarily fouling your piece. A gun has no right ever to miss fire *now*; and never *does*

if you use Westley Richards' caps and diamond gunpowder, putting the caps on the *last thing*, which has the further advantage of being much the safer plan; and seeing that the powder is up to the cones before you do so. If it is not so, let your hammer down, and give a smart tap to the under side of the breech, holding it uppermost, and you will never need a picker—or at least almost never. Remember, too, that the best picker in the world is a strong needle headed with sealing-wax. And now that you have finished loading, and I lecturing, just jump over the fence to your right; and that footpath will bring us to the stepping-stones across the Ramapo. By Jove, but we shall have a lovely morning!"

He did so, and away they went, with the dogs following steadily at the heel,—crossed the small river dry-shod, climbed up the wooded bank by dint of hand and foot, and reached the broad brown corn stubble. Harry, however, did not wave his dogs to the right hand and left, but calling them in, quietly plodded along the head-land, and climbed another fence, and crossed a buckwheat stubble, still without beating or disturbing any ground, and then another field full of

long bents and ragwort, an old deserted pasture, and Frank began to grumble, but just then a pair of bars gave access to a wide fifty acre lot, which had been wheat, the stubble standing still knee-deep, and yielding a rare covert.

"Now we are at the far end of our beat, and we have got the wind too in the dogs' noses, Master Frank; and so hold up, good lads," said Harry. And off the setters shot like lightning, crossing and quartering their ground superbly.

"There, there! well done, old Chase! a dead stiff point already, and Shot backing him as steady as a rail. Step up, Frank, step up quietly, and let us keep the hill of them."

They came up close, quite close to the staunch dog, and then, but not till then, he feathered and drew on, and Shot came crawling up till his nose was but a few inches in the rear of Chase's, whose point he never thought of taking from him. Now they are both upon the game. See how they frown and slaver; the birds are close below their noses.

Whirr—r—r! "There they go, a glorious bevy!" exclaimed Harry, as he cocked his right barrel and cut down the old cock bird, which had

risen rather to his right-hand, with his loose charge; "blaze away, Frank!" Bang! bang! and two more birds came fluttering down; and then he pitched his gun up to his eye again, and sent the cartridge after the now distant bevy, and to Frank's admiration a fourth bird was keeled over most beautifully, and clean killed, while crossing to the right, at forty-six yards, as they paced it afterward.

"Now mark, mark, Timothy!—mark, Frank!" And shading their eyes from the level sunbeams, the three stood gazing steadily after the rapid bevy. They cross the pasture, skim very low over the brush fence of the corn-field—they disappear behind it—they are down!—no, no, not yet!—they are just skirting the summit of the topped maize stalks—now they are down indeed, just by that old ruined hovel, where the cat-briers and sumach have overspread its cellar and foundation with thick underwood. And all the while, the sturdy dogs are crouching at their feet unmoving.

"Will you not follow those, Harry?" Forester inquired—"there are at least sixteen of them!"

"Not I," said Archer, "not I, indeed, till I

have beat this field; I expect to put up another bevy among those little crags there in the corner, where the red cedars grow; and if we do, they will strike down the fence of the buckwheat stubble—that stubble we must make good, and the rye beside it, and drive, if possible, all that we find before us to the corn-field. Don't be impatient, and you'll see in time that I am in the right."

No more words were now wasted; the four birds were bagged without trouble, and, the sportsmen being in the open, were handed over on the spot to Tim, who stroked their freckled breasts and beautifully mottled wing coverts and backs, with a caressing touch, as though he loved them; and finally, in true Jack Ketch style, tucked them up severally by the neck. Archer was not mistaken in his prognostics—another bevy had run into the dwarf cedars from the stubble at the sound of the firing, and were roaded up in right good style, first one dog, and then the other, leading, but without any jealousy or haste.

They had, however, run so far, that they had got wild, and, as there was no bottom covert on the crags, had traversed them quite over to the

open, on the far side; and, just as Archer was in the act of warning Forester to hurry softly round and head them, they flushed at thirty yards, and had flown some five more before they were in sight, the feathery evergreens for a while cutting off the view—the dogs stood dead at the sound of their wings. Then, as they came in sight, Harry discharged both barrels very quickly—the loose shot first, which evidently took effect, for one bird cowered and seemed about to fall, but gathered wing again, and went on for the present—the cartridge, which went next, although the bevy had flown ten yards further, did its work clean, and stopped its bird. Frank fired but once, and killed, using his cartridge first, and thinking it in vain to fire the loose shot. The remaining birds skimmed down the hill, and lighted in the thick bushy hedge-row, as Archer had foreseen.

“So much for Eley!” exclaimed Harry; “had we both used two of them, we should have bagged four then. As it is, I have killed one which we shall not get; a thing that I most particularly hate.”

“That bird will rise again,” said Frank.

"*Never!*" replied the other; "he has one, if not two, shot in him, well forward—if I am not much mistaken, before the wing—he is dead now! but let us on. These we must follow, for they are on our line; you keep this side the fence, and I will cross it with the dogs—come with me, Timothy."

In a few minutes more there was a dead point at the hedge-row.

"Look to, Frank!"

"Ay, ay!" "Poke them out, Tim!"—then followed sundry bumps and threshings of the briers, and out, with a noisy flutter, burst two birds under Forester's nose. Bang! bang!

"The first shot too quick altogether," muttered Archer; "Ay, he has missed one; mark it, Tim!—there he goes down in the corn, by jingo! you've got that bird, Frank? That's well! Hold up, Shot,"—another point within five yards. "Look out again, Frank."

But this time vainly did Tim poke, and thresh, and peer into the bushes; yet still Shot stood, stiff as a marble statue; then Chase drew up and snuffed about, and pushed his head and fore-legs into the matted briers, and thereupon a muzzling

noise ensued, and forthwith out he came, mouth-
ing a dead bird, warm still, and bleeding from
the neck and breast.

“Frank, he has got my bird ; and shot, just as
I told you, through the neck and near the great
wing joint—good dog ! good dog !”

“The devil !”

“Yes, the devil ! but look out, man, here is yet
one more point ;” and this time ten or twelve
birds flushed upon Archer’s side—he slew, as
usual, his brace, and as they crossed, at long
distance, Frank knocked down one more ; the rest
flew to the corn-field.

In the middle of the buckwheat they flushed
another, and, in the rye, another bevy, both of
which crossed the stream, and settled down among
the alders. They reached the corn-field, and picked
up their birds there, quite as fast as Frank him-
self desired ; three ruffed grouse they had bagged,
and four rabbits, in a small dingle full of thorns,
before they reached the corn ; and just as the tin
horns were sounding for noon and dinner from
many a neighbouring farm, they bagged their
thirty-fourth quail. At the same moment, the
rattle of a distant wagon on the hard road, and a

loud cheer replying to the last shot, announced the Commodore; who pulled up at the tavern door just as they crossed the stepping-stones, having made a right good morning's work, with a dead certainty of better sport in the afternoon, since they had marked two untouched bevvies, thirty-five birds at least, beside some ten or twelve more stragglers into the alder brakes, which Harry knew to hold, moreover, thirty woodcock, as he said, at the fewest.

"Well, Harry," exclaimed Frank, as he set down his gun, and sat down to the table, "I must for once knock under; your *practice* has borne out your *precepts*."

THE WOODCOCK.

LUNCHEON was soon discussed, a noble cold quail-pie and a spiced round of beef, which formed the most essential parts thereof, displaying in their rapidly diminished bulk ocular evidence of the extent of sportmen's appetites; a single glass of shrub and water followed, cheroots were lighted, and forth the comrades sallied, the Commodore inquiring as they went what were the prospects of success.

"You fellows," he concluded, "have, I suppose, swept the ground completely."

"That you shall see directly," answered Archer; "I shall make you no promises. But see how evidently Grouse recollects those dogs of mine, though it is nearly a year since they have met; don't *you* think so, A——?"

"To be sure I do," replied the Commodore; "I saw it the first moment you came up—had they been strangers he would have tackled them upon

the instant; and instead of that he began wagging his tail, and wriggling about, and playing with them. Oh! depend upon it, dogs think, and remember, and reflect far more than we imagine—”

“ Oh! run back, Timothy—run back!” here Archer interrupted him—“ we don’t want you this afternoon. Harness the nags and pack the wagon, and put them to, at five—we shall be at home by then, for we intend to be at Tom’s to-night. Now look out, Frank, those three last quail we marked in from the hill dropped in the next field, where the ragwort stands so thick; and five to one, as there is a thin growth of brushwood all down this wall side, they will have run down hither. Why, man alive! you’ve got no copper caps on!”

“ By George! no more I have—I took them off when I laid down my gun in the house, and forgot to replace them.”

“ And a very dangerous thing you did in taking them off, permit me to assure you. Any one but a fool, or a very young child, knows at once that a gun *with* caps on is loaded. You leave yours on the table without caps, and in comes some meddling chap or other, puts on one *to try the locks*, or

to frighten his sweetheart, or for some other no less sapient purpose, and off it goes! and if it kill no one, it's God's mercy! Never do that again, Frank!"

Meanwhile they had arrived within ten yards of the low rickety stone wall, skirted by a thin fringe of saplings, in which Archer expected to find game—Grouse, never in what might be called exact command, had disappeared beyond it.

"Hold up, good dogs!" cried Harry; and as he spoke away went Shot and Chase—the red dog, some three yards ahead, jumped on the wall, and, in the act of bounding over it, saw Grouse at point beyond. Rigid as stone he stood upon that tottering ridge, one *hind* foot drawn up in the act of pointing, for both the fore were occupied in clinging to some trivial inequalities of the rough coping, his feathery flag erect, his black eye fixed, and his lip slavering; for so hot was the scent that it reached his exquisitely fashioned organs, though Grouse was many feet advanced between him and the game. Shot backed at the wall-foot, seeing the red dog only, and utterly unconscious that the pointer had made the game beyond.

"By Jove! but that *is* beautiful!" exclaimed

the Commodore. "That is a perfect picture!—the very perfection of steadiness and breaking."

They crossed the wall, and poor Shot, in the rear, saw them no more; his instinct strongly, ay, *naturally*, tempted him to break in, but second nature, in the shape of discipline, prevailed; and, though he trembled with excitement, he moved not an inch. Grouse was as firm as iron, his nose within six inches of a bunch of wintergreen, pointed directly downward, and his head cocked a little on one side—they stepped up to him, and, still on the wall-top, Chase held to his uneasy attitude.

"Now then," said Harry, "look out, till I kick him up."

No sooner said than done—the toe of his thick shooting-boot crushed the slight evergreen, and out whirled, with his white chaps and speckled breast conspicuous, an old cock quail. He rose to Forester, but ere that worthy had even cocked his gun—for he had now adopted Archer's plan, and carried his piece always at half-cock, till needed—flew to the right across the Commodore; so Frank released his hammer and brought down his Manton, while A—— deliberately covered, and handsomely cut down the bird at five-and-twenty yards.

Grouse made a movement to run in, but came back instantly when called.

"Just look back, if you please, one moment before loading," said Harry, "for that down-charge is well worth looking at."

And so indeed it was—for there, upon the wall-top, where he had been balancing, Chase had contrived to lie down at the gunshot—wagging his stern slightly to and fro, with his white fore-paws hanging down, and his head couched between them, his haunches propped up on the coping-stone, and his whole attitude apparently unteachable for half a minute.

"Now, load away, for pity's sake, as quickly as you can; that posture must be anything but pleasant."

This was soon done; inasmuch as the Commodore is not exactly one to dally in such matters; and when his locks ticked, as he drew the hammers to half-cock, Chase quietly dismounted from his perch, and Shot's head and fore-paws appeared above the barrier; but not till Archer's hand gave the expected signal, did the staunch brutes move on.

"Come, Shot, good dog! it is but fair you should have some part of the fun. Seek dead,

seek dead! that's it, sir! Toho, steady! Fetch him, good lad! Well done!"

In a few minutes' space, four or five more birds came to bag—they had run, at the near report, up the wall side among the bushes, and the dogs footed them along it, now one and now another taking the lead successively, but without any eagerness or raking—looking round constantly, each to observe his comrades' or his master's movements, and pointing slightly, but not steadily, at every foot, till at the last all three, in different places, stood almost simultaneously—all three dead points.

One bird jumped up to Frank, which he knocked over. A double shot fell to the Commodore, who held the centre of the line, and dropped both cleverly; the second, a long shot, wing-tipped only. Harry flushed three and killed two clean, both within thirty paces, and then covered the third bird with his empty barrels; but, though no shot could follow from that quarter, he was not to escape scot-free, for wheeling short to the left hand, and flying high, he crossed the Commodore in easy distance, and afterward gave Forester a chance.

"Try him, Frank," halloaed Archer, and "It's no use!" cried A——, almost together, just as he raised his gun, and levelled it a good two feet before the quail.

But it *was* use, and Harry's practised eye had judged the distance more correctly than the short sight of the Commodore permitted; the bird quailed instantly, as the shot struck, but flew on notwithstanding, slanting down wind, however, toward the ground, and falling on the hill-side at a full hundred yards.

"We shall not get him," Forester exclaimed; and I am sorry for it, since it was a good shot."

"A right good shot," responded Harry, "and we *shall* get him. He fell quite dead; I saw him bounce up like a ball, when he struck the hard ground. But A——'s second bird is only wing-tipped, and I don't think we shall get him; for the ground where he fell is very tussocky and full of grass, and if he creeps in, as they mostly will do, into some hole in the bog-ground, it is ten to one against the best dog in America!"

And so it came to pass, for they *did* bag Forester's, and all the other quail except the Commodore's, which, though the dogs trailed him well,

and worked like Trojans, they could not for their lives make out.

After this little rally they went down to the alders by the stream side, and had enough to do, till it was growing rapidly too dark to shoot — for the woodcock were very plentiful; it was sweet ground too, not for feeding only, but for lying, and that, as Harry pointed out, is a great thing in the autumn.

The grass was short and still rich under foot, although it froze hard every night; but all along the brook's marge there were many small oozy bubbling springlets, which it required a stinging night to congeal; and round these the ground was poached up by the cattle, and laid bare in spots of deep, soft, black loam; and the innumerable chalkings told the experienced eye at half a glance, that where they laid up for the night soever, here was their feeding ground, and here it had been through the autumn.

But this was not all, for at every ten or twenty paces was a dense tuft of willow bushes, growing for the most part upon the higher knolls where it was dry and sunny, their roots heaped round with drift wood, from the decay of which had shot up

a dense tangled growth of cat-briers. In these the birds were lying, all but some five or six which had run out to feed, and were flushed, fat, and large, and lazy, quite in the open meadow.

"They stay here later," Harry said, as they bagged the last bird, which, he it observed, was the twenty-seventh, "than any where I know. Here I have killed them when there was ice thicker than a dollar on all the waters round about, and when you might see a thin and smoke-like mist boiling up from each springlet. Kill them all off to-day, and you will find a dozen fresh birds here to-morrow, and so on for a fortnight; they come down from the high ground as it gets too cold for them to endure their high and rarified atmosphere, and congregate hither."

"And why not more in number at a time?" asked A——.

"Ay! there we are in the dark—we do not know sufficiently the habits of the bird, to speak with certainty. I do not think they are pugnacious, and yet you never find more on a feeding ground than it will well accommodate for many days, nay weeks, together. One might imagine that their migrations would be made *en masse*,

that all the birds upon these neighbouring hills would crowd down to this spot together, and feed here till it was exhausted, and then on; but this is not so. I know fifty small spots like this, each a sure find in the summer for three or four broods, say from eight to twelve birds. During the summer, when you have killed the first lot, no more return; but the moment the frost begins, there you will find them—never exceeding the original eight or ten in number, but keeping up continually to that mark; and whether you kill none at all, or thirty birds a-week, there you will always find about that number, and in no case any more. Those that are killed off are supplied, within two days at farthest, by new comers; yet, so far as I can judge, the original birds, if not killed, hold their own, unmolested by intruders. Whence the supplies come in—for they must be near neighbours by the rapidity of their succession—and why they abstain from their favourite grounds in worse *locations*, remains, and I fear we must remain, in the dark. All the habits of the woodcock are, indeed, very partially and slightly understood. They arrive here, and breed early in the spring, sometimes, indeed, before the snow is off the hills;

get their young off in June, and with their young are most unmercifully, most unsportsmanly, thinned off, when they can hardly fly—such is the error, as I think it, of the law; but I could not convince my staunch friends Philo, and J. Cypress, Jr., of the fact, when they bestirred themselves in favour of the progeny of their especial favourites, *perdix virginiana* and *tetrao umbell*, and did defer the times for slaying them legitimately to such a period, that it is in fact next to impossible to kill the latter bird at all. But vainly did I plead, and a false advocate was Cypress after all, despite his nominal friendship, for that unhappy *scolopax*, who in July at least deserves his nickname *minor*, or the infant. For, setting joking apart, what a burning shame it is to murder the poor little half-fledged younglings in July, when they will scarcely weigh six ounces; when they will drop again within ten paces of the dog that flushes, or the gun that misses them; and when the heat will not allow you even to enjoy the consummation of their slaughter! Look at these fellows now, with their gray foreheads, their plump ruddy breasts, their strong, well-feathered pinions, each one ten ounces at the

least. Think how these jolly old cocks tower away, with their shrill whistle, through the tree-tops, and twist and dodge with an agility of wing and thought-like speed, scarcely inferior to the snipe's or swallow's, and fly a half-mile if you miss them, and laugh to scorn the efforts of any one to bag them, who is not a right out-and-outer! No chance shot, no stray pellet, speaks for these; it must be the charge, the whole charge, and nothing but the charge, which will cut down the grown bird of October! The law should have said, Woodcock thou shalt *not* kill until September; quail thou shalt *not* kill till October, the twenty-fifth, if you please; partridge thou *shalt* kill in all places, and at all times, when thou canst, and that, as we know, Frank and A——, that is not every where or often."

"But, seriously," said the Commodore, "seriously, would you indeed abolish summer shooting?"

"Most seriously, most solemnly I would!" Archer responded. "In the first place because, as I have said, it is a perfect sin to shoot cock in July; and secondly, because no one would, I am convinced, shoot for his own pleasure at *that* season, if it were not a question of now or never.

Between the intense heat, and the swarms of musquitoes, and the unfitness of that season for the dogs, which can rarely scent their game half the proper distance, and the density of the leafy coverts; and lastly, the difficulty of keeping the game fresh till you can use it, render July shooting a toil, in my opinion, rather than a real pleasure; although we are such hunting creatures, that rather than not have our prey at all, we will pursue it in all times, and through all inconveniences. Fancy, my dear fellows, only fancy what superb shooting we should have if not a bird were killed till they were all full grown, and fit to kill! fancy bagging a hundred and twenty-five *fall* woodcock in a single autumn day, as we did this very year on a summer's day!"

"Oh! I agree with you completely," said Frank Forester; "but I am afraid such a law will never be brought to bear in this country; the very day on which cock shooting does not really begin, but is supposed by nine-tenths of the people to begin—the fourth of July, is against it.* Moreover, the amateur *killers* of game are so very very few,

* In the State of New York, close time for woodcock expires on the last day of June—in New Jersey, on the fourth of July,—leaving the bird lawful prey on the 1st and the 5th, respectively.

in comparison with the amateur *eaters* thereof, that it is all but impossible to enforce the laws at all upon this subject. Woodcock even now are eaten in June—nay, I have heard, and believe it to be true, that many hotels in New York serve them up even in March and April; quail, this autumn, have been sold openly in the markets, many days previous to the expiration of close time. And in fact, sorry I am to say it, so far as eating-houses are in question, the game laws are nearly a dead letter.

“ In the country, also, I have universally found it to be the case, that although the penalty of a breach may be exacted from strangers, no farmer will differ with a neighbour, as they call it, for the sake of a bird. Whether time, and a greater diffusion of sporting propensities and sporting feelings, may alter this for the better or no, I leave to sager and more politic pates than mine. And now I say, Harry, you surely do not intend to trundle us off to Tom Draw’s to-night without a drink at starting? I see Timothy has got the drag up to the door, and the horses harnessed, and all ready for a start.”

“ Yes, yes! all that’s true,” answered Harry,

“ but take my word for it, the liquor case is not put in yet. Well, Timothy,” he went on, as they reached the door, “ that is right. Have you got every thing put up?”

“ All but t’ gam’ bag and t’ liquor ca-ase, sur,” Tim replied, touching his hat gnostically as he spoke; “ Ay reckoned, ple-ease sur, ’at you’d maybe want to fill t’ yan oop, and empty t’ oother!”

“ Very well thought, indeed!” said Archer, winking to Forester the while. “ Let that boy stand a few minutes to the horses’ heads, and come into the house yourself and pack the birds up, and fetch us some water.”

“ T’ watter is upon t’ table, sur, and t’ cigars, and a loight; but Ay’s e be in wi you directly. Coom hither, lad, till Ay shew thee hoo to guide ’em; thou maunna tooch t’ bits for the loife o’ thee, but joost stan’ there anent them—if they stir loike, joost speak to ’em—Ayse hear thee!” and he left his charge and entered the small parlour, where the three friends were now assembled, with a cheroot apiece already lighted, and three tall brimming rummers on the table.

“ Look sharp and put the birds up,” said Harry,

pitching, as he spoke, the fine fat fellows right and left out of his wide game pockets; "and when that's done, fill yourself out a drink, and help us on with our great-coats."

"What are you going to do with the guns?" inquired the Commodore.

"To carry them uncased and loaded; substituting in my own two buckshot cartridges for loose shot," replied Archer. "The Irish are playing the very devil through this part of the country—we are close to the line of the great Erie railroad—and they are murdering and robbing, and I know not what, for miles around. The last time I was at old Tom's he told me that but ten days or a fortnight previously a poor Irish woman, who lived in his village, started to pay a visit to her mother by the self-same road we shall pass to-night, and was found the next morning with her person brutally abused, kneeling against a fence stone dead, strangled with her own cambric handkerchief. He says, too, that not a week passes but some of them are found dead in the meadows, or in the ditches, killed in some lawless fray; and no one ever dreams of taking any notice, or making any inquiry about the matter."

"Is it possible? then keep the guns at hand by all means!"

"Yes; but this time we will violate my rule about the copper caps—there is no rule, you are aware, but what has some exception—and the exception to this of mine is, always take off your copper caps before getting into a wagon; the jar will occasionally explode them, an upset will undoubtedly. So uncap, Messrs. Forester and A——, and put the bright little exploders into your pockets, where they will be both safe and handy. And now, birds are in, drinks are in, dogs and guns are in, and now let us be off!"

No more words were wasted; the landlord's bill was paid, Frank Forester and Timothy got up behind, the Commodore took the front seat, Harry sprang, reins in hand, to the box, and off they bowled, with lamps and cigars burning merrily, for it was now quite dark, along the well-known mountain road, which Archer boasted he could drive as safely in the most gloomy night of winter as in a summer noon. And so it proved this time, for though he piloted his horses with a cool head and delicate finger through every sort of difficulty that a road can offer, up long and toilsome hills

without a rail between the narrow track and the deep precipice, down sharp and stony pitches, over loose clattering bridges, along wet marshy levels, he never seemed in doubt or trouble for a moment, but talked and laughed away, as if he were a mere spectator.

After they had gone a few miles on their way—"You broke off short, Archer," said the Commodore, "in the middle of your dissertation on the natural history and habits of the woodcock, turning *à propos des bottes* to the cruelty of killing them in midsummer. In all which, by the way, I quite agree with you. But I don't want to lose the rest of your lucubrations on this most interesting topic. What do you think becomes of the birds in August, after the moult begins?"

"Verily, Commodore, that is a positive poser. Many good sportsmen believe that they remain where they were before; getting into the thickest and wettest brakes, refusing to rise before the dog, and giving out little or no scent."

"Do you believe this?"

"No; I believe there is a brief migration, but whither, I cannot tell you with any certainty."

Some birds do stay, as they assert; and that a few *do* stay, and *do* give out enough scent to enable dogs to find them, is a proof to me that *all* do not. A good sportsman can always find a few birds even during the moult, and I do not think that birds killed at that time are at all worse eating than others. But I am satisfied that the great bulk shift their quarters, whither, I have not yet fully ascertained; but I believe to the small runnels and deep swales which are found throughout all the mountain tracts of the middle States; and in these, as I believe, they remain dispersed and scattered in such small parties that they are not worth looking after, till the frost drives them down to their old haunts. A gentleman, whom I can depend on, told me once that he climbed Bull Hill one year late in September—Bull Hill is one of the loftiest peaks in the Highlands of the Hudson—merely to show the prospect to a friend, and he found all the brushwood on the summit full of fine autumn cock, not a bird having been seen for weeks in the low woodlands at the base. They had no guns with them at the time, and some days elapsed before he could again spare a few hours to hunt them up; in the meantime

frost came, the birds returned to their accustomed swamps and levels, and, when he did again scale the rough mountain, not a bird rewarded his trouble. This, if true, which I do not doubt, would go far to prove my theory correct; but it is not easy to arrive at absolute certainty, for if I am right, during that period birds are to be found nowhere in abundance; and a man must be a downright Audubon to be willing to go mountain-stalking—the hardest walking in the world, by the way—purely for the sake of learning the habits of friend *scolopax*, with no hope of getting a good bag after all.”

“How late have you ever killed a cock previous to their great southern flight?”

“Never myself beyond the fifteenth of November; but Tom Draw assures me, and his asseveration was accidentally corroborated by a man who walked along with him, that he killed thirty birds last year in Hell-Hole, which both of you fellows know, on the thirteenth of December. There had been a very severe frost indeed, and the ice on that very morning was quite thick, and the mud frozen hard enough to bear in some places. But the day was warm, bright, and genial, and, as he

says, it came into his head to see 'if cock was all gone,' and he went to what he knew to be the latest ground, and found the very heaviest and finest birds he ever saw."

"Oh! that of course," said A——, "if he found any! Did you ever hear of any other birds so late?"

"Yes; later. Mike Sandford, I think, but some Jerseyman or other, killed a couple the day after Christmas-day, on a long southern slope covered with close dwarf cedars, and watered by some tepid springs, not far from Pine Brook; and I have been told that the rabbit shooters, who always go out in a party between Christmas and New Year's day, almost invariably flush a bird or two there in mid-winter. The same thing is told of a similar situation on the south-western slope of Staten Island: and I believe truly in both instances. These, however, must, I think, be looked upon, not as cases of late emigration, but as rare instances of the bird wintering here to the northward; which I doubt not a few do annually. I should like much to know if there is any State of the Union where the cock is perennial. I do not see why he should not be so in Maryland or Dela-

ware, though I have never heard it stated so to be. The great heat of the extreme southern summer drives them north, as surely as our northern winter sends them south; and the great emigrations of the main flight northward in February and March, and southward in November, varying by a few days only according to the variations of the seasons."

"Well, I trust they have not emigrated hence yet—ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Commodore, with his peculiar hearty deep-toned merriment.

"Not they, not they, I warrant them!" said Archer; "but that to-morrow must bring forth."

"Come, Harry," exclaimed Forester, after a little pause, "spin us a shooting yarn, to kill the time, till we get to fat Tom's."

"A yarn! well, what shall it be?"

"I don't know;—oh! yes, yes, I do. You once told me something about a wolf-hunt, and then shut up your mouth all at once, and would give me no satisfaction."

"A wolf-hunt?" cried the Commodore, "were you ever at a wolf-hunt; and here in this country, Harry?"

"Indeed was I, and—"

"The story, then, the story; we must have it."

"Oh! as for story, there is not much—"

"The story, the story!" shouted Frank.

"You may as well begin at once, for we will have it."

"Oh! very well. All is one to me, but you will be tired enough of it before I have got through, so here goes for

A WOLF HUNT ON THE WARWICK HILLS,"

said Archer, and without more ado spun his yarn as follows.

"There are few wilder regions within the compass of the United States, much less in the vicinity of its most populous and cultivated districts, than that long line of rocky wood-crowned heights which—at times rising to an elevation and exhibiting a boldness of outline that justifies the application to them of the term 'mountains,' while at others they would be more appropriately designated as hills or knolls—run all across the Eastern and the Midland States, from the White Mountains westward to the Alleghanies, between which mighty chains they form an intermediate and continuous link.

“Through this stern barrier all the great rivers of the States, through which they run, have rent themselves a passage, exhibiting in every instance the most sublime and boldest scenery, while many of the minor, though still noble streams, come forth sparkling and bright and cold from the clear lakes and lonely springs embosomed in its dark recesses.

“Possessing, for the most part, a width of eight or ten miles, this chain of hills consists, at some points, of a single ridge, rude, forest-clad and lonely—at others, of two, three, or even four distinct and separate lines of heights, with valleys more or less highly cultured, long sheets of most translucent water, and wild mountain streams dividing them.

“With these hills—known as the Highlands—where the gigantic Hudson has cloven, at some distant day, a devious path for his eternal and resistless waters; and by a hundred other names, the Warwick Hills, the Greenwoods, and yet farther west, the Blue Ridge and the Kittatinny Mountains, as they trend southerly and west across New York and New Jersey—with these hills I have now to do.

“ Not as the temples meet for the lonely muse, fit habitations for the poet’s rich imaginings! not as they are most glorious in their natural scenery—whether the youthful May is covering their rugged brows with the bright tender verdure of the tasselled larch, and the yet brighter green of maple, mountain ash and willow, or the full flush of summer has clothed their forests with impervious and shadowy foliage, while carpeting their sides with the unnumbered blossoms of calmia, rhododendron and azalea!—whether the gorgeous hues of autumn gleam like the banners of ten thousand victor armies along their rugged slopes, or the frozen winds of winter have roofed their headlands with inviolate white snow! Not as their bowels teem with the wealth of mines which ages of man’s avarice may vainly labour to exhaust; but as they are the loved abode of many a woodland denizen that has retreated, even from more remote and seemingly far wilder fastnesses, to these sequestered haunts. I love them, in that the graceful hind conceals her timid fawn among the ferns that wave on the lone banks of many a nameless rill, threading their hills, untrodden save by the miner, or the unfrequent huntsman’s foot

—in that the noble stag frays oftentimes his antlers against their giant trees—in that the mighty bear lies hushed in grim repose amid their tangled swamps—in that their bushy dingles resound nightly to the long-drawn howl of the gaunt famished wolf—in that the lynx and wild cat yet mark their prey from the pine branches—in that the ruffed grouse drums, the woodcock bleats, and the quail chirrup from every height or hollow—in that, more strange to tell, the noblest game of transatlantic fowl, the glorious turkey, although, like angels' visits, they be indeed but few and far between, yet spread their bronzed tails to the sun, and swell and gobble in their most secret wilds.

“I love those hills of Warwick! Many a glorious day have I passed in their green recesses; many a wild tale have I heard of sylvan sport and forest warfare, and many, too, of patriot partizanship in the old revolutionary days—the days that tried men's souls—while sitting at my noontide meal by the secluded well-head, under the canopy of some primeval oak, with implements of woodland sport, rifle or shot-gun by my side, and well-broke setter or staunch hound recumbent at

my feet. And one of these tales will I now venture to record, though it will sound but weak and feeble from my lips, if compared to the rich, racy, quaint and humorous thing it was, when flowing from the nature-gifted tongue of our old friend Tom Draw."

"Hear, hear!" cried Frank, "the chap is eloquent."

"It was the middle of the winter 1832, which was, as you will recollect, of most unusual severity, that I had gone up to Tom Draw's with a view merely to quail shooting, though I had taken up, as usual, my rifle, hoping perhaps to get a chance shot at a deer. The very first night I arrived, the old bar-room was full of farmers, talking all very eagerly about the ravages which had been wrought among their flocks by a small pack of wolves, five or six, as they said, in number, headed by an old gaunt famished brute, which had for many years been known through the whole region by the loss of one hind-foot, which had been cut off in a steel trap.

"More than a hundred sheep had been destroyed during the winter, and several calves beside; and what had stirred especially the bile

of the good yeomen, was that, with more than customary boldness, they had the previous night made a descent into the precincts of the village, and carried off a fat wether of Tom Draw's.

"A slight fall of snow had taken place the morning I arrived, and, this suggesting to Tom's mind a possibility of hunting up the felons, a party had gone out and tracked them to a small swamp on the Bellevale Mountain, wherein they had undoubtedly made their head-quarters. Arrangements had been made on all sides—forty or fifty stout and active men were mustered, well armed, though variously, with muskets, ducking-guns, and rifles; some fifteen couple of strong hounds, of every height and colour, were collected; some twenty horses, saddled and bridled, and twice as many sleighs were ready, with provisions, ammunition, liquor, and blankets, all prepared for a week's bivouac. The plan prescribed was in the first place to surround the swamp, as silently as possible, with all our forces, and then to force the pack out so as to face our volley. This, should the method be successful, would finish the whole hunt at once; but should the three-legged savage succeed in making

his escape, we were to hunt him by relays, bivouacking upon the ground wherever night should find us, and taking up the chase again upon the following morning, until continual fatigue should wear out the fierce brute. I had two horses with me, and Tim Matlock; so I made up my mind at once, got a light one-horse sleigh up in the village, rigged it with all my bear-skins, good store of whiskey, eatables, and so forth, saddled the gray with my best Somerset, holsters and surcingle attached, and made one of the party on the instant.

“Before daylight we started, a dozen mounted men leading the way, with the intent to get quite round the ridge, and cut off the retreat of these most wily beasts of prey before the coming of the rear-guard should alarm them—and the remainder of the party sleighing it merrily along, with all the hounds attached to them. The dawn was yet in its first gray dimness when we got into line along the little ridge which bounds that small dense brake on the north-eastern side—upon the southern side the hill rose almost inaccessible in a succession of short limestone ledges—westward

the open woods, through which the hounds and footmen were approaching, sloped down in a long easy fall, into the deep secluded basin, filled with the densest and most thorny coverts, and in the summer time waist deep in water, and almost inaccessible, though now floored with a sheet of solid ice, firm as the rocks around it—due northward was an open field, dividing the wolf-dingle from the mountain road by which we always travel.

“Our plot had been well laid, and thus far had succeeded. I, with eleven horsemen, drawn up in easy pistol shot one of the other, had taken our ground in perfect silence; and, as we readily discovered, by the untrodden surface of the snow, our enemies were as yet undisturbed. My station was the extreme left of our line, as we faced westward, close to the first ridge of the southern hill; and there I sat in mute expectancy, my holsters thrown wide open, my Kuchenreüters loaded and cocked, and my good ounce-ball rifle lying prepared within the hollow of my arm.

“Within a short half-hour I saw the second

party, captained by our friend Garry, coming up one by one, and forming silently and promptly upon the hill-side, and directly after I heard the crash and shout of our beaters as they plunged into the thicket at its westward end. So far as I could perceive, all had gone well. Two sides, my own eyes told me, were surrounded, and the continuous line in which the shouts ran all along the farther end would have assured me, if assurance had been needful, for Tom himself commanded in that quarter, that all was perfectly secure on that side. A Jerseyman, a hunter of no small repute, had been detached with a fourth band to guard the open fields upon the north; due time had been allotted to him, and, as we judged, he was upon his ground. Scarce had the first yell echoed through the forest before the pattering of many feet might be heard, mingled with the rustling of the matted boughs throughout the covert—and as the beaters came on, a whole host of rabbits, with no less than seven foxes, two of them gray, came scampering through our line in mortal terror; but on they went unharmed, for strict had been the orders that no shot should be

fired, save at the lawful objects of the chase. Just at this moment I saw Garry, who stood a hundred feet above me on the hill, commanding the whole basin of the swamp, bring up his rifle. This was enough for me—my thumb was on the cock, the nail of my forefinger pressed closely on the trigger-guard. He lowered it again, as though he had lost sight of his object—raised it again with great rapidity, and fired. My eye was on the muzzle of his piece, and just as the bright stream of flame glanced from it, distinctly visible in the dim morning twilight, before my ear had caught the sound of the report, a sharp, long snarl rose from the thicket, announcing that a wolf was wounded. Eagerly, keenly did I listen; but there came no farther sound to tell me of his whereabouts.

“‘I hit him,’ shouted Garry, ‘I hit him then, I swon! but I guess not so badly, but he can travel still. Look out you, Archer, he’s squatted in the thick there, and won’t stir till they get close a top on him.’

“While he was speaking yet, a loud and startling shout arose from the open field, an-

nouncing to my ear upon the instant that one or more had broken covert at some unguarded spot, as it was evident from the absence of any firing. The leader of our squad was clearly of the same opinion, for, motioning to us to spread our line a little wider, he galloped off at a tremendous rate, spurning the snowballs high into the air, accompanied by three of his best men, to stop the gap which had been left through the misapprehension of the Jerseyman.

“This he accomplished ; but not until the great wolf, wilier than his comrades, had got off unharmed. He had not moved five minutes before a small dark bitch wolf broke away through our line, at the angle farthest from my station, and drew a scattering volley from more than half our men, too rapid and too random to be deadly, though several of the balls struck close about her. I thought she had got off scot-free ; but Jem McDaniel, whom you know, a cool old steady hand, had held his fire, and taking a long, quiet aim, lodged his ball fairly in the centre of her shoulders. Over she went, and over, tearing the snow with tooth and claw in her death agony ;

while, fancying, I suppose, that all our guns were emptied—for, by my life, I think the crafty brutes can almost reason—out popped two more; one between me and my right-hand man, the other, a large dog, dragging a wounded leg behind him, under my horse's very feet. Bob made a curious demi-volte, I do assure you, as the dark brindled villain darted between his fore-legs, with an angry snarl; but at a single word, and slight admonition of the curb, stood motionless, as though he had been carved in marble. Quickly I brought my rifle up, though steadily enough, and—more, I fancy, by good luck than management—planted my bullet in the neck, just where the skull and spine unite, so that he bounced three feet at least above the frozen snow, and fell quite dead, within twelve paces of the covert. The other wolf, which had crept out to my right-hand, was welcomed by the almost simultaneous fire of three pieces, one of which only lodged its bullet, a small one by the way—eighty or ninety only to the pound, too light entirely to tell a story—in the brute's loins.

“He gave a savage yell enough as the shot

told, and, for the first twenty or thirty yards, dragged his hind-quarters heavily ; but, as he went on, he recovered, gathering headway very rapidly over the little ridge, and through the open woodland, toward a clear field on the mountain's brow. Just as this passed, a dozen shots were fired, in a quick running volley, from the thicket, just where an old cart-way divides it, followed, after a moment's pause, by one full round report, which I knew instantly to be the voice of old Tom's musket ; nor did I err ; for, while its echoes were yet vocal in the leafless forest, the owner's jovial shout was heard.

“ ‘ Wiped all your eyes, boys ! all of them, by the Eternal ! Who-whoop for our side ! And I'll bet horns for all on us, old leather-breeches has killed his'n.' ”

“ This passed so rapidly—in fact, it was all nearly simultaneous—that the fourth wolf was yet in sight when the last shot was fired. We all knew well enough that the main object of our chase had for the time escaped us ; the game was all afoot—three of them slain already : nor was there any longer aught to be gained by sticking

to our stations. So, more for deviltry than from entertaining any real hope of overtaking him, I chucked my rifle to the nearest of the farmers, touched old Bob with the spur, and went away on a hard gallop after the wounded fugitive, who was now plodding onward, at the usual long, loping canter of his tribe. For about half-a-mile the wood was open, and sloped gently upward, until it joined the open country, where it was bounded by a high, rugged fence, made in the usual snake fashion, with a huge heavy top-rail. This we soon reached; the wolf, which was more hurt than I had fancied, beginning to lag grievously, crept through it scarcely a hundred yards a-head of me, and, by good luck, at a spot where the top-rail had been partially dislodged, so that Bob swept over it, almost without an effort, in his gallop; though it presented an impenetrable rampart to some half-dozen of the horsemen who had followed. I was now in a cleared lot of some ten acres, forming the summit of the hill, which, farther on, sunk steeply into a dark ravine full of thick brushwood, with a small verge of thinly growing coppice, not more than twenty yards in

width, on tolerably level ground, within the low stone wall which parted it from the cultivated land. I felt that I was now upon my vantage ground, and you may be sure, Frank, that I spared not the spurs; but the wolf, conscious, probably, of the vicinity of some place of safety, strained every nerve, and ran, in fact, as if he had been almost unwounded; so that he was still twelve or fourteen paces from me when he jumped on the wall.

“Once over this, I well knew he was safe; for I was thoroughly acquainted with the ground, and was of course aware that no horse could descend the banks of the precipitous ravine. In this predicament, I thought I might as well take a chance at him with one of my good pistols, though, of course, with faint hopes of touching him. However, I pulled out the right-hand nine-inch barrel, took a quick sight, and let drive at him; and, much to my delight, the sound was answered by the long, snarling howl, which I had that day heard too often to doubt any more its meaning. Over he jumped, however, and the wall covering him from my sight, I had no means of judging

how badly he was hurt, so on I went, and charged the wall with a tight rein and a steady pull; and lucky for me was it that I had a steady pull, for under the lee of the wall there was a heap of rugged logs, into which Bob plunged gallantly, and, in spite of my hard hold on him, floundered a moment, and went over. Had I been going at top speed, a very nasty fall must have been the immediate consequence; as it was, both of us rolled over, but with small violence, and on soft snow, so that no harm was done.

“As I came off, however, I found myself in a most unpleasant neighbourhood; for my good friend the wolf, hurt pretty badly by the last shot, had, as it seemed, ensconced himself among the logs, whence Bob’s assault and subsequent discomfiture had somewhat suddenly dislodged him: so that, as I rolled over on the snow, I found myself within six feet of my friend, seemingly very doubtful whether to fight or fly. But, by good luck, my bullet had struck him on the hip-bone, and being of a rather large calibre, had let his claret pretty freely loose, besides shattering the bone, so that he was but in poor fighting trim,

and I had time to get back to the gray, who stood snorting and panting, up to his knees in snow and rubbish, but without offering to stir—to draw my second pistol, and to give Isegrin, as the Germans call him, the *coup de grace* before he could attain the friendly shelter of the dingle, to which with all due speed he was retreating. By this time all our comrades had assembled. Loud was the glee, boisterous the applause, which fell especially to me, who had performed with my own hand the glorious feat of slaying two wolves in one morning; and deep the cups of apple-jack, Scotch whiskey, and Jamaica spirits, which flowed in rich libations, according to the tastes of the compotators, over the slaughtered quarry.

“Breakfast was produced on the spot; cold salt pork, onions, and hard biscuit forming the principal dishes, washed down by nothing weaker than the pure ardent! Not long, however, did fat Tom permit us to enjoy our ease.

“‘Come, boys,’ he shouted, ‘no lazin’ here, no gormandizin’—the worst part of our work’s afore us; the old lame devil is afoot, and five miles off by now. We must get back, and lay the

hounds on, right stret off—and well if the scent an't cold now! He's tuk right off toward Duck-cedars'—for so Tom ever calls Truxedo Pond, a lovely crescent-shaped lakelet deep in the bosom of the Greenwoods—'so off with you, Jem, down by the road, as hard as you can strick with ten of your boys in sleighs, and half the hounds; and if you find his tracks acrost the road, don't wait for us, but strick right arter him. You, Garry, keep stret down the old road with ten dogs and all the plunder—we'll meet at night, I reckon.'

"No sooner said than done; the parties were sent off with the relays. This was on Monday morning. Tom and I, and some thirteen others, with eight couple of the best dogs, stuck to his slot on foot. It was two hours at least, so long had he been gone, before a single hound spoke to it, and I had begun well nigh to despair; but Tom's immense sagacity, which seemed almost to know instinctively the course of the wily savage, enabling us to cut off the angles of his course, at last brought us up somewhat nearer to him. At about noon, two or three of the hounds opened, but doubtfully and faintly. His slot, however,

showed that they were right, and lustily we cheered them on; Tom marvelling the while that we heard not the cry of Jem's relay.

" 'For I'll be darned,' he said, 'if he hasn't crossed the road long enough since; and that dumb nigger Jem's not had the sense to stick to him!'

" For once, however, the fat man was wrong; for, as it appeared when we neared the road, the wolf had headed back, scared doubtless by some injudicious noise of our companions, and making a wide ring, had crossed three miles below the spot where Jem was posted. This circuit we were forced to make, as at first sight we fancied he had headed altogether back, and it was four o'clock before we got upon his scent, hot, fresh, and breast-high; running toward the road, that is, due eastward from the covert whence he had bolted in the morning. Nor were our friends inactive; for guided by the clamours of our pack, making the forests musical, they now held down the road; and, as the felon crossed, caught a long view of him as he limped over it, and laid the fresh hounds on.

“ A brilliant rally followed; we calling off our wearied dogs, and hasting to the lower road, where we found Garry with the sleighs, and dashing off in our turn through all sorts of by-paths and wood-roads to head them once again. This, with much labour, we effected; but the full winter moon had risen, and the innumerable stars were sparkling in the frosty skies, when we flogged off the hounds—kindled our night fires, prepared our evening meal, feasted, and spread our blankets, and slept soundly under no warmer canopy than the blue firmament—secure that our lame friend would lie up for the night at no great distance. With the first peep of dawn we were again afoot, and, the snow still befriending us, we roused him from a cedar brake at about nine o'clock, cut him off three times with fresh dogs and men, the second day, and passed the night, some sixteen miles from home, in the rude hovel of a charcoal burner.

“ Greater excitement I cannot imagine, than that wild, independent chase: sometimes on foot, cheering the hounds through swamp and dingle, over rough cliffs and ledges where foot of horse could avail nothing; sometimes on horse-

back, galloping merrily through the more open woodlands; sometimes careering in the flying sleigh, to the gay music of its bells, along the wild wood paths. Well did we fare, too—well, ay, sumptuously;—for our outskirters, though they reserved their rifles for the appropriate game, were not so sparing with the shot-gun; so that, night after night, our caldron reeked with the mingled steam of rabbit, quail, and partridge, seethed up *à la Meg Merrilies*, with fat pork, onions, and potatoes—by the Lord Harry! Frank, a glorious and unmatched *consommée*.

“To make, however, a long tale short—for every day’s work, although varied to the actors by thousands of minute but unnarratable particulars, would appear but as a repetition of the last to the mere listener—to make a long tale short, on the third day he doubled back, took us directly over the same ground, and in the middle of the day, on Saturday, was roused in view by the leading hounds, from the same little swamp in which the five had harboured during the early winter. No man was near the hounds when he broke covert. But fat Tom, who had been

detached from the party to bring up provisions from the village, was driving in his sleigh steadily along the road, when the sharp chorus of the hounds aroused him. A minute after, the lame scoundrel limped across the turnpike, scant thirty yards before him. Alas! Tom had but his double-barrel, one loaded with buck-shot, the other merely prepared for partridge; he blazed away, however, but in vain! Out came ten couple on his track, hard after him; and old Tom, cursing his bad luck, stood to survey the chase across the open.

“ Strange was the felon’s fate! The first fence, after he had crossed the road, was full six feet in height, framed of huge split logs, piled so close together that, save between the two topmost rails, a small dog even could have found no passage. Full at this opening the wolf dashed, as fresh, Tom said, as though he had not run a yard; but as he struggled through it, his efforts shook the top rails from the yokes, and the huge piece of timber falling across his loins pinned him completely. At a mile off I heard his howl myself, and the confused and savage hubbub, as the hounds, front and rear, assailed him.

“Hampered although he was, he battled it out fiercely—ay, heroically; as six of our best hounds maimed for life, and one slain outright, testified.

“Heavens, how the fat man scrambled across the fence! he reached the spot, and, far too much excited to reload his piece and quietly blow out the fierce brute’s brains, fell to belabouring him about the head with his gun stock, shouting the while and yelling; so that the din of his tongue, mixed with the snarls and long howls of the mangled savage, and the fierce baying of the dogs, fairly alarmed me, as I said before, at a mile’s distance.

“As it chanced, Timothy was on the road close by, with Peacock; I caught sight of him, mounted, and spurred on fiercely to the rescue; but when I reached the hill’s brow, all was over. Tom, puffing and panting like a grampus in shoal-water, covered—garments and face and hands—with lupine gore, had finished his huge enemy, after he had destroyed his gun, with what he called a *stick*, but what you and I, Frank, should term a fair-sized tree; and with his foot upon the brindled

monster's neck, was quaffing copious rapture from the neck of a quart bottle—once full, but now well-nigh exhausted—of his appropriate and cherished beverage.* Thus fell the last wolf on the hills of Warwick.

“There, I have finished my yarn, and in good time,” cried Harry, “for here we are at the bridge, and in five minutes more we shall be at old Tom's door.”

“A right good yarn,” said Forester, “and right well spun, upon my word.”

“But is it a yarn?” asked A——; “or is it intended to be the truth?”

“Oh! the truth,” laughed Frank, “the truth, as much as Archer *can* tell the truth; embellished, you understand, embellished!”

“The truth, strictly,” answered Harry, quietly, “the truth, not embellished. When I tell personal adventures, I am not in the habit of decorating them with falsehood.”

“I had no idea,” responded the Commodore, “that there had been any wolves here so recently.”

* The facts and incidents of the lame wolf's death are strictly true, although they were not witnessed by the writer.

"There are wolves here *now*," said Archer, "though they are scarce and wary. It was but last year that I rode down over the back-bone of the mountain, on the Pompton road, in the night time, and that on the third of July, and one fellow followed me along the road till I got quite down into the cultivated country."

"The devil he did!"

"How did you know he was following you?" exclaimed Frank and the Commodore, almost in a breath.

"Did you see him?"

"Not I; but I heard him howl half-a-dozen times, and each time nearer than before. When I got out of the hills he was not six hundred yards behind me."

"Pleasant, that! Were you armed? What did you do?"

"It was not really so unpleasant, after all—for I knew that he would not attack me at that season of the year. I had my pistols in my holsters; and for the rest, I jogged steadily along, taking care to keep my nag in good wind for a spirt, if it should be needed. I knew that for three or four

miles I could outrun him, if it should come to the worst, though in the end a wolf can run down the fastest horse; and, as every mile brought me nearer to the settlement, I did not care much about it. Had it been winter, when the brutes are hard pressed for food, and the deep snows are against a horse's speed, it would be a very different thing. Hurrah, here we are! Hurrah, fat Tom! ahoy, a-ho-oy!"

THE SUPPER PARTY.

BLITHE, loud and hearty was the welcome of fat Tom, when by the clear view halloa with which Harry drove up to the door at a spanking trot, the horses stopping willingly at the high well-known stoop, he learned who were these his nocturnal visitors. There was a slight tinge of frostiness in the evening air, and a bright blazing fire filled the whole bar-room with a cheerful merry light, and cast a long stream of red lustre from the tall windows and half open doorway; but in an instant all that escaped from the last-mentioned aperture was totally obstructed, as if the door had been pushed to, by the huge body of mine host.

"Why, d—n it," he exclaimed, "if that bean't Archer! and a hull grist of boys he's brought along with him, too, any how. How are you, Harry? who've you got along? It's so eternal thunderin' dark as I can't see 'em no how!"

"Frank and the Commodore, that's all," Archer replied. "And how are you, old Corporation?"

"Oh, oh! I'm most d—d glad as you've brought A—; you might have left that other critter to home, though, jest as well; we doosn't want him blowin' out his little hide here; lazin' about, and doin' nothin' day nor night but eat and grumble, and drink, and drink, as if he'd got a meal sack in his little guts. Why, Timothy, how be you?" he concluded, smiting him on the back a downright blow, that would have almost felled an ox, as he was getting out the baggage.

"Doan't thee noo, Measter Draa," expostulated Tim; "behaave thyself, man, or Ay 'se give thee soomat thou woan't loike, I'm thinking. Noo, send oot yan o' t' nagers, joost to stand tull t' nags till Ay lift oot t' boxes."

"A nigger, is it? d—n their black skins! there was a dozen here jest now, a blockin' up the fire-side, and stinkin' so no white man could come nearst it, till I got an axe-handle, half an hour or so since, and cleared out the heap of them. Niggers! they'll be here all of them torights, I warrant; where you sees Archer, there's never no scaceness of dogs and niggers. But come, walk in boys, walk in, anyhow; Jem'll be here torights, and he's worth two d—d niggers any day, though

he's black-fleshed, I guess, if one was jest to skin the eternal creatur."

Very few minutes passed before they were all drawn up round the fire, Captain Reade and two or three more making room for them, as they pulled up their chairs about the glowing hearth, having hung up their coats and capes against the wall.

"You'll be here best, boys," said Tom, "for a piece; the parlour fire's not been lit yet this fall, and it is quite cold nights now; but Brower'll kindle it up agin supper, for you'll be wantin' to eat, all of you, I reckon, you're sich d—d everlasting gormandizers."

"That most undoubtedly we shall," said Frank, "for it's past eight now, and the deuce a mouthful have we put into our heads since twelve."

"Barrin' the liquor, Frank, barrin' the liquor! Now don't lie! don't lie, boy, so ridic'lous;—as if I'd known you these six years, and then was agoin' to believe as you'd not dranked since noon!"

"Why, you old hogshead you! who wants you to believe anything of the kind? we had one drink at Tom's, your cousin's, when we started, but deuce the drop since."

“ That’s just the reason why you’re so snarlish, then, I reckon. Your coppers is got bilin’, least-wise if they bean’t all biled out; you’d best drink stret away, I guess, afore the bottom of the biler gits left bare—for if it does, and it’s red-hot now, boy, you’ll be a blowin’ up, like an old steam-boat when you pumps in fresh water.”

“ Well, Tom,” said Archer, “ I do not think it would be a bad move to take a drop of something, and a cracker; for I suppose we shall not get supper much short of two hours; and I’m so deuced hungry, that if I don’t get something just to take off the edge, I shall not be able to eat when it does come.”

“ I’ll make a pitcher of egg nog; A—— drinks egg nog, I guess, although he’s the poorest drinkin’ man I ever did see. Now, Brower, look alive; the fire’s lit, is it? Well, then, jump now and feed them two poor starvin’ bags-a-bones, as Archer calls *dogs*, and tell your mother to git supper. Have you brought anything along to eat or drink, boys? I guess we haven’t nothin’ in the house!”

“ Oh, you be hanged!” said Harry; “ I’ve brought a round of cold spiced beef, but I’m not

going to cut that up for supper; we shall want it to take along for luncheon—you must *get* something. Oh, by the way, you may let the girls pick half-a-dozen quail and broil them, if you choose.”

“Quail, do you say? and where ’ll I git quail, I ’d be pleased to know?”

“Out of that game-bag,” answered Harry, deliberately, pointing to the well filled plump net which Timothy had just brought in and hung up on the pegs beside the box-coats. Without a word or syllable the old chap rushed to the wall, seized it, and scarcely pausing to sweep out of the way a large file of “The Spirit,” and several numbers of “The Register,” emptied it on the table.

“Where the devil, Archer, did you kill them?” he asked; “you didn’t kill all them to-day, I guess? One, two, three—why, there’s twenty-seven cock, and forty-nine quail! By gin! here’s another; just fifty quail, three partridge, and six rabbits; well, that’s a most all-fired nice mess, I swon; if you killed them to-day you done right well, I tell you—you won’t git no such mess of birds here now; but you was two days killin’ these, I guess?”

“ Not we, Tom! Frank and I drove up from York last night, and slept at young Tom’s, down the valley; we were out just as soon as it was light, and got the quail, all except fifteen or sixteen, the ruffed grouse and four rabbits, before twelve o’clock. At twelve the Commodore came up from Nyack, where he left his yacht, and joined us; we got some luncheon, went out again at one, and between that and five bagged all the cock, the balance, as you would call it, of the quail, and the other two bunnies.”

“ Well, then, you made good work of it, I tell you, and you won’t do nothin’ like that agin this winter—not in Warwick; but I won’t touch them quail—it’s a sin to break that bunch—but you don’t never care to take the rabbits home, and the old woman’s got some beautiful fresh onions—she’ll make a stew of them—a smother, as you call it, in a little less than no time, Archer; and I’ve got half-a-dozen of them big gray snipe—English snipe—that I killed down by my little run’-side; you’ll have them roasted with the guts in, I guess? and then there’s a pork-steak and sassagers—and if you don’t like that, you can jist go without. Here, Brower,

take these to your mother, and tell her to git supper right stret off—and you tell Emma Jane to make some buckwheat cakes for A——; he can't sup no how without buckwheat cakes; and I sets a great store by A——; I doos, by G—! and you needn't laugh, boys, for I doos a darned sight more than what I doos by you."

"That's civil, at all events, and candid," replied Frank; "and it's consolatory, too; for I can fancy no greater reproach to a man, than to be set store on by you. I do not comprehend at all how A—— bears up under it. But come, do make that egg nog that you're chattering about."

"How will I make it, Harry—with beer, or milk, or cider?"

"All three. Now be off, and don't jaw any more!" answered Archer—"asking such silly questions, as if you did not know better than any of us."

In a few minutes the delicious compound was prepared, and, with a plate of toasted crackers and some right good Orange County butter, was set on a small round stand before the fire, while, from the neighbouring kitchen, rich fumes

began to load the air, indicative of the approaching supper. In the meantime, the wagon was unloaded; Timothy bustled to and fro; the parlour was arranged; the bed-rooms were selected by that worthy; and everything set out in its own place, so that they could not possibly have been more comfortable in their own houses. The horses had been duly cleaned, and clothed, and fed; the dogs provided with abundance of dry straw, and a hot mess of milk and meal; and now, in the far corner of the bar-room, the indefatigable varlet was cleaning the three double guns, as scientifically as though he had served his apprenticeship to a gunsmith.

Just at this moment a heavy foot was heard upon the stoop, succeeded by a whining and a great scratching at the door. "Here comes that Indian, Jem," cried Tom; and as he spoke the door flew open, and in rushed old Whino, the tall black-and-tan fox-hound, and Bonnybelle, and Blossom, and another large blue-mottled bitch, of the Southern breed. It was a curious sight to observe by how sudden and intuitive an instinct the hounds rushed up to Archer, and fawned upon him, jumping up with their fore-paws upon

his knees, and thrusting their bland smiling faces almost into his face; as he, nothing loth, nor repelling their caresses, discoursed most eloquent dog language to them, until, excited beyond all measure, old Whino seated himself deliberately on the floor, raised his nose toward the ceiling, and set up a long, protracted, and most melancholy howl, which, before it had attained, however, to its grand climax, was brought to a conclusion by being converted into a sharp and treble yell! a consummation brought about by a smart application of Harry's double-thonged four-horse whip, wielded with all the power of Tom's right arm, and accompanied by a "Git out, now, d—n you, the whole grist! Kennel, now, kennel! out with them, Jem, consarn you; out with them, and yourself too! out of this, or I'll put the gad about you, you white Deckerin' nigger, you!"

"Come back, when you have put them up, Jem; and mind you don't let them be where they can get at the setters, or they'll be fighting like the devil," interposed Archer—"I want to have a chat with you. By the by, Tom, where's Dash?—you'd better look out, or the Commodore's

dog, Grouse, will eat him before morning—mine will not quarrel with him, but Grouse will to a certainty."

"Then for a sartainty I'll shoot Grouse, and wallop Grouse's master, and that'll be two d—d right things done one mornin'; the first would be a most d—d right one, any how, and kind too! for then A—— would be forced to git himself a good, nice setter dog, and not go shootin' over a great old fat bustin' pinter, as isn't worth so much as I be to hunt birds!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the Commodore, whom nothing can, by any earthly means, put out of temper,—“ha, ha, ha! I should like to see you shoot Grouse, Tom; for all the store you set by me, you'd get the worst of that game. You had better take Archer's advice, I can tell you."

"Archer's advice, indeed! it's likely now that I'd have left my nice little dog to be spiled by your big brutes, now aint it? Come, come, here's supper."

"Get something to drink, Jem, along with Timothy, and come in when we've got through supper."

"Yes, sir," replied the knight of the cut-throat,

“I’ve got some news to tell you, Tom, too, if you’ll wait a bit.”

“D—n you, and your news too,” responded Tom; “you’re sich a thunderin’ liar, there’s no knowin’ when you do speak truth. We’ll not be losin’ our supper for no lies, I guess; leastways I won’t. Come, Archer!”

And with a right good appetite they walked into the parlour. Everything was in order; every article placed just as it had been when Frank went up to spend his first week in the Woodlands; the gun-case stood on the same chairs below the window; the table by the door was laid out with the same display of powder-flasks, shot-pouches, and accoutrements of all sizes. The liquor stand was placed by Harry’s chair, open, containing the case bottles, the rummers being duly ranged upon the board, which was well lighted by four tall wax candles, and being laid with Harry’s silver, made quite a smart display. The rabbits smoked at the head, smothered in a rich sauce of cream, and nicely shredded onions; the pork chops thin and crisply broiled, exhaled rich odours at the bottom; the English snipe, roasted to half a turn, and reposing on their neat

squares of toast, were balanced by a dish of well-fried sausages, reclining on a bed of mashed potatoes; champagne was on the table, unresined and unwired, awaiting only one touch of the knife to release the struggling spirit from its transparent prison. Few words were spoken for some time, unless it were a challenge to champagne, the corks of which popped frequently and furiously; or a request for another snipe, or another spoonfull of the sauce; while all devoted themselves to the work in hand with a sincere and business-like earnestness of demeanour, that proved either the excellence of Tom Draw's cookery, or the efficacy of the Spartan sauce which the sportsmen had brought to assist them at their meal. The last rich drops of the fourth flask were trickling into Tom's wide-lipped rummer, when Harry said,—

“Come, we have done, I think, for one night; let's have the eatables removed, and we will have a pipe, and hear what Jem has got to say; and you have told us nothing about birds, either, you old elephant!—what do you mean by it? That's right, Tim, now bring in my cigars, and Mr. Forester's cheroots, and cold iced water, and boiling

hot water, and sugar out of my box, and lemons. The shrub is here; and the Scotch whiskey. Will you have another bottle of champagne, Tom? No! Well, then, look sharp, Timothy, and send Jem in."

And thereupon Jem entered, thumbing his hat assiduously, and sat down in the corner by the window, where he was speedily accommodated with a supply of liquor, enough to temper any quantity of clay.

"Well, Jem," said Archer, "unbutton your bag now; what's the news?"

"Well, Mr. Aircher, it ben't no use to tell you on 't, with Tom, there, puttin' a body out, and swearin' it's a lie, and dammin' a chap up and down. It ben't no use to tell you, and yet I'd kind o' like to, but then you won't believe a fellow, not one on you."

"In course not," answered Forester; and at the same instant Tom struck in likewise—

"It's a lie, afore you tell it; it's a lie, d—n you, and you knows it. I'd sooner take a nigger's word than your's, Jem, any how; for the d—d niggers will tell the truth when they can't git no good by lyin', but you—you *will* lie all times!

When the truth would do the best, and you would tell it if you could, you can't help lyin'."

"Shut up, you old thief; shut up instantly, and let the man speak, will you? I can see by his face that he has got something to tell; and as for lying, you beat him at it any day."

Tom was about to answer, when Harry, who had been eagerly engaged in mixing a huge tumbler-full of strong cold shrub punch, thrust it under his nose, and he, unable to resist the soft seductive odour, seized it incontinently, and neither spoke nor breathed again until the bottom of the rummer was brought parallel to the ceiling; then, with a deep heart-felt sigh, he set it down; uttered a most appalling eructation; and then, with a calm placid smile, exclaimed, "Tell on, Jem." Whereupon that worthy launched into his full tide of narrative, as follows.

"Well, you sees, Mr. Aircher, I tuk up this mornin' clean up the old crick side, nigh to Vernon, and then I turned in back of old Squire Vandergriff's, and druv the mountains clear down here till I reached Rocky Hill; I'd pretty good sport, too, I tell you; I shot a big gray fox on Round Top, and started a raal rouser of a red one

down in the big swamp, in the bottom, and them sluts did keep the darndest ragin' you ever did hear tell on. Well, they tuk him clean out across the open, past Andy Joneses, and they skeart up in his stubbles three bebies, I guess, got into one like: there was a drove of them, I tell you, and then they brought him back to the hills agin, and run him twice clean round the Rocky Hill, and when they came round the last time, the English sluts warn't half a rod from his tail no how, and so he tried his last chance, and he holed; but my! now Mr. Aircher, by d—n you niver did see nothin' like the partridges! they kept a brushin' up and brushin' up, and treein' every little while; I guess if I seen one I seen a hundred; why, I killed seven on 'em with coarse shot up in the pines, and I daredn't shoot exceptin' at their heads. If you'll go up there now, to-morrow, and take the dogs along, I know as you'll git fifty."

"Well, if that's all your news, Jem, I won't give you much for it; and, as for going into the mountains to look after partridges, you don't catch me at it, that's all!" said Harry. "Is that all?"

"Not by a great shot!" answered Jem, grin-

ning; "but the truth is, I know you won't believe me; but I can tell you what, you can kill a big fat buck, if you'll git up a little afore daylight!"

"A buck, Jem! a buck near here?" inquired Forester and Archer in a breath.

"I told you, boys, the critter couldn't help it; he's stuck to truth jest so long, and he was forced to lie, or else he would have busted!"

"It's true, by thunder!" answered Jem; "I wish I mayn't eat nor drink nother, if there's one bit of lie in it; d—n the bit, Tom! I'm in airnest, now, right down; and you knows as I wouldn't go to lie about it."

Well, well; where was't, where was't, Jem?"

"Why, he lies, I guess, *now*, in that little thickest swamp of all, jist in the eend of the swale atween Round Top and Rocky Hill, right in the pines and laurels; leastways I druv him down there with the dogs, and I swon that he never crossed into the open meadow; and I went round, and made a circle like clean round about him, and d—n the dog trailed on him no how; and bein' as he's hard hot, I guess he'll stay there since he harboured."

"Hard hit, is he? why, did you get a shot at him?"

"A fair one," Jem replied; "not three rod off from me; he jumped up out of the channel of Stony Brook, where, in a sort o' bend, there was a lot of bushes, sumach and winter-green, and ferns; he skeart me, that's a fact, or I'd a killed him. He warn't ten yards off when he bounced up first, but I pulled without cocking, and when I'd got my gun fixed, he'd got off a little piece, and I'd got nauthen but fox-shot, but I hot him jist in the side of the flank; the blood flew out like winkin', and the hounds arter him like mad, up and down, and round and back, and he a kind o' weak like, and they'd overhauled him once and again, and tackled him, but there was only four on them, and so he beat them off like every time, and onned again. They couldn't hold him no how, till I got up to them, and I couldn't fix it no how, so as I'd git another shot at him; but it was growin' dark fast, and I flogged off the sluts arter a deal o' work, and viewed him down the old blind run-way into the swale eend, where I telled you; and then I laid still quite a piece; and then I circled round, to see if he'd quit it, and not one dog tuk track on

him, and so I feels right sartain as he's in that hole now, and will be in the mornin', if so be we goes there in time, afore the sun's up."

"That we can do easily enough," said Archer; "what do you say, Tom? Is it worth while?"

"Why," answered old Draw instantly, "if so be only we could be sartain that the d—d critter warn't a lyin', there couldn't be no doubt about it; for if the buck did lay up there this night, why he'll be there to-morrow; and if so be he's there, why we can get him sure!"

"Well, Jem, what have you got to say now," said the Commodore; "is it the truth or no?"

"Why, darn it all," retorted Jem, "harn't I just told you it was true; it's most d—d hard a fellow can't be believed now;—why, Mr. Archer, did I ever lie to you?"

"Oh! if you ask me that," said Harry, "you know I must say 'Yes,'—for you have fifty times at the least computation. Do you remember the day you towed me up the Decker's run to look for woodcock?"

"And you found nothing," interrupted Tom, "but wood"—

"Oh, shut up, do, Tom," broke in Forester, "and let us hear about this buck. If we agree to give you a five dollar bill, Jem, in case we do find him where you say, what will you be willing to forfeit if we do not?"

"You may shoot at me, by G—d!" answered Jem, "all on you—ivery one on you—at forty yards, with rifle or buckshot."

"It certainly is very likely that we should be willing to get hanged for the sake of shooting such a mangy hound as you, Jem," answered Forester, "when one could shoot a good clean dog—Tom's Dash, for example—for nothing!"

"Could you, though?" Tom replied; "I'd like to ketch you at it, my dear boy; I'd wax the little hide off of you. But come, let us be settling. Is it a lie now, Jem; speak out; is it a lie, consarn you? for if it be, you'd best jest say 't out now, and save your bones to-morrow. Well, boys, the critter's sulky, so most like it is true, and I guess we'll be arter him. We'll be up bright and airly, and go a horseback, and if he be there, we can kill him in no time at all, and be right back to breakfast. I'll start Jem and the Captain here, and Dave Seers, with the dogs, an

hour afore us ; and let them come right down the swale, and drive him to the open ;—Harry and Forester, you two can ride your own nags, and I'll take old Roan, and A—— here shall have the colt."

"Very well. Timothy, did they feed well to-night ? if they did, give them their oats very early, and no water. I know it's too bad after their work to-day, but we shall not be out two hours."

"Weel ; it's no matter gin they were oot six," responded Timothy, "they wadna be a pin the waur o't !"

"Take out my rifle, then, and pick some buckshot cartridges to fit the bore of all the double guns. Frank's got his rifle, so you can take my heavy single gun ; your gauge is 17, A——, quite too small for buckshot ; mine is 11, and will do its work clean with Eley's cartridge and pretty heavy powder, at eighty-five to ninety yards. Tom's bore is twelve, and I've brought some to fit his old double, and some, too, for my own gun, though it is almost too small."

"What gauge is yours, Harry ?"

"Fourteen ; which I consider the very best bore possible for general shooting. I think the

gunsmiths are running headlong now into the opposite of their old error—when they found that fifteens and fourteens outshot vastly the old small calibres. Fifty years since no guns were larger than eighteen, and few than twenty; they are now quite out-doing it. I have seen late imported guns of seven pounds, and not above twenty-six inches long, with eleven and even ten gauge calibres; you might as well shoot with a blunderbuss at once!”*

“They would tell at cock in close summer covert,” answered A——.

‘Fo r a man who can’t cover his bird they might,” replied Harry; “but you may rely on it they lose three times as much in force as they gain in the space they cover; at forty yards you could not kill even woodcock with them once in fifty times, and a quail, or English snipe, at that distance, never!”

“What do you think the right length and weight, then, for an eleven bore?”

“Certainly not less than nine pounds, and thirty

* Since this was written, the fashion has changed again, and the English gunsmiths are building all seventeens and eighteens—too small, I think, for general work, and for this country especially.

inches ; but I would prefer ten pounds and thirty-three inches ; though, except for a fowl-gun to use in boat-shooting, such a piece would be quite too ponderous and clumsy. My single gun is eleven gauge, eight pounds and thirty-three inches ; and even with loose shot executes superbly ; but with Eley's *green* cartridge I have put forty BB shot into a square of two-and-a-half feet at one hundred and twenty-five yards ; sharply enough, too, to imbed the shot so firmly in the fence against which I had fixed my mark, that it required a good strong knife to get them out. This I propose that you should use to-morrow, with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. SG cartridge, which contains eighteen buckshot, and which, if you get a shot any where within a hundred yards, will kill him as dead, I warrant it, as an ounce bullet."

" Which you intend to try, I fancy," added Frank.

" Not quite ; my rifle carries eighteen only to the pound ; and yours, if I forget not, only thirty-two."

" But mine is double."

" Never mind that ; thirty-two will not execute with certainty above a hundred and fifty yards."

"And how far, in the devil's name, would you have it execute, as you calls it?" asked old Tom.

"Three hundred," replied Harry, coolly.

"Devil," replied Draw, "don't tell me no sich thunderin' nonsense; I'll stand all day and be shot at, like a Christmas turkey, at sixty rods, for sixpence a shot, any how."

"I'll bet you all the liquor we can drink while we are here, Tom," answered Harry, "that I hit a four-foot target at three hundred yards to-morrow."

"Off hand?" inquired Tom, with an attempt at a sneer.

"Yes, off hand; and no shot to do that either; I know men, lots of them, who would bet to hit a foot* square at that distance."

* When this was written strong exception was taken to it by a Southern writer in the "Spirit of the Times." Had that gentleman known what is the practice of the heavy Tyrolese rifle, he would not have written so confidently. But it is needless to go so far as to the Tyrol. There is a well-known rifle-shot in New York, who can perform the feat, any day, which the Southern writer scoffed at as utterly impossible.

Scrope on Deerstalking will show to any impartial reader's satisfaction, that stags in the Highlands are rarely killed within 200, and generally beyond 300 yards' distance.

" Well, you can't hit four, *no how*."

" Will you bet?"

" Sartain!"

" Very well—Done!—Twenty dollars I will stake against all the liquor we drink while we're here. Is it a bet?"

" Yes, Done!" cried Tom,—“ at the first shot, you know; I gives no second chances.”

" Very well, as you please! I'm sure of it, that's all. Lord, Frank, how we will drink and treat! I shall invite all the town up here to-morrow. Come—one more round for luck, and then to bed."

" Content," cried A——; " but I mean Mr. Draw to have an argument to-morrow night about this point of Setter *v.* Pointer. How do you say, Harry? which is best?"

" Oh! I'll be judge and jury," answered Archer, " and you shall plead before me; and I'll make up my mind in the meantime."

" He's for me, any how," shouted Tom. " Darn it all, Harry, you knows you wouldn't own a pinter—no, not if it was gin you."

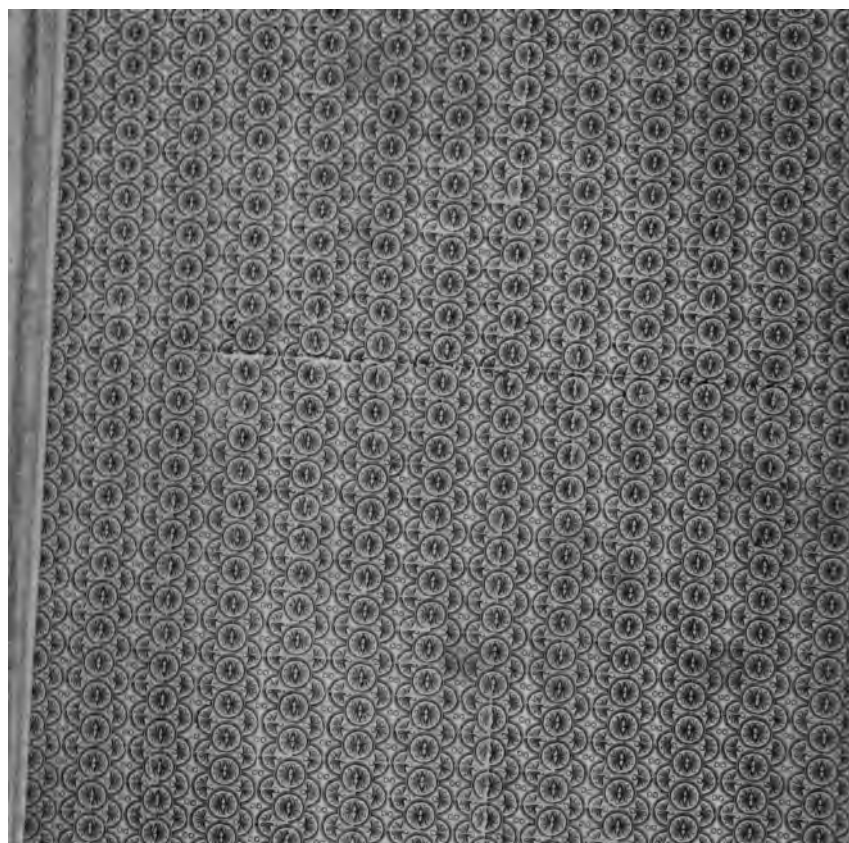
" I believe you are about right there, old fellow,

so far as this country goes at least," said Archer; "different dogs for different soils and seasons; and, in my judgment, setters are far the best this side the Atlantic. But it is late now, and I can't stand chattering here—good night—you shall have as much dog-talk as you like to-morrow."

END OF VOL. I.







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